

IRISH Writing

EDITED BY DAVID MARCUS & TERENCE SMITH



THE MAGAZINE OF CONTEMPORARY IRISH LITERATURE

24

21

*Assurance
is made
Doubly
Sure—by*

★ There is a great difference between New Ireland Life-Endowment Policies and ordinary endowment policies. We provide **DOUBLE** benefits in the event of fatal accident without any extra premium. Write for particulars.

Assets exceed £5,000,000

NEW IRELAND ASSURANCE CO., LTD.

Head Office: 12 DAWSON STREET, DUBLIN.

M. W. O'REILLY, P.C., F.C.I.I., Managing Director.

DON'T Ask for

SELF-RAISING FLOUR



ASK for

"Golden Grain"

The Self-Raising Flour De-Luxe



Manufactured by

JOHN LEHANE & CO.

PRODUCE BUILDINGS, CORK.

DÚIL

LIAM Ó FLAITHEARTA

8/6 trí dhíoltóirí leabhar nó ó

SÁIRSÉAL AGUS DILL

11 Br. Gleannabhna, Áth Cliath

IRISH WRITING

EDITED BY DAVID MARCUS AND TERENCE SMITH

NUMBER TWENTY-FOUR

SEPTEMBER, 1953

CONTENTS

	PAGE
SCHOOLLESS SCHOLARS	THE EDITORS 5
THE CLIPPINGS OF TIN	MAURICE KENNEDY 7
THE TALKER	SEAN LUCY 15
BOTTLES AND OLD BONES	EON NEESON 23
THE FIRST TERM	EUGENE McCABE 30
ZILLI	JOHN CURRAN 40
OLD CROZIER	NORA WATSON 45
OURSELVES SURVEYED	VAL MULKERN 48
ROMANTICISM AND EXILE	GORDON WHARTON 56
BOOK REVIEWS	EUGENE McCABE TERESA DEEVY P. J. MADDEN, T.O'D. 62
POETRY IRELAND SUPPLEMENT	65
	72

SPRATT'S

'Builds-up'
a dog

All dogs are more sprightly on

SPRATT'S

Spratt's Patent (Ireland) Ltd.
64 Sth. Gt. George's St., Dublin

OK-B

Sean-focla Connacht

Volume I and II.

TOMÁS S. Ó MÁILLE

"A tremendous amount of search and research has gone into this work, and it represents a speech-treasury which no student of the language can afford to be without. The Gúm' deserves high praise for its enterprise in publishing it.—*Irish School Weekly.*

Volume I—4/- Net.

Volume II—5/- Net.

Obtainable through any bookseller, or direct from

FOISEACÁN RIALTAIS
G.P.O. ARCADE, DUBLIN.

DENT



By the author of
Lovely is the Lee
Sweet Cork of Thee
Sweet Thames Run Softly
Coming Down the Wye
etc.

Robert Gibbings's
new book

Coming Down the Seine

Robert Gibbings, artist to his fingertips, has chosen for his latest river book the Seine, which includes Paris, natural heart of the artistic world. The book is filled with passages rich in imagery, apt stories, amusing 'characters,' and over 50 wood engravings. 18s.



READY OCTOBER 1

Patricia Lynch's

new story for
Children

Delia Daly of Gallopings Green

The fortunes of a young Irish family will fascinate young readers in this new story by the author of *The Turf-Cutter's Donkey* series, etc.

Illustrated by KIDDELL-MONROE.
8s. 6d.

SCHOOLLESS SCHOLARS

In literature, as in life, this is a country of slow—though perhaps for that reason of more sure—development. So it is with some surprise, as also with the sense of pleasure felt on such occasions as dispense with apology and extenuation, that we find the average age of the contributors in this young writers' issue to be something under twenty-five. Further, the work given here seems, for the most part, remarkably mature. One might even have wished for a little more Icarus-like experimentalism. But "when abounding hedges ring" we say that "winter's best of all."

Coolness, detachment and steady observation, as well as freshness, seem particularly noticeable in the stories by Maurice Kennedy and Eugene McCabe. Further signs of "getting down to it" are evident in the work of two Cork writers, Sean Lucey and Eoin Neeson, whose writings show every token of intelligent application to the work of their native masters, Sean O'Faolain and Frank O'Connor. Nora Watson is sensitively word-sparing, and John Curran depicts the panic of exile with sober truth.

It may be asked if there is, otherwise, any *marked* connection between the work of these young writers, or whether the poets herein presented raise a recognisably Irish voice or show any evidence of the high tradition to which they belong. It would be hazardous, if tempting, to define any kind of formal link. No literary movement is current just now in Ireland—unless it be that of Mr. Clarke and of Mr. O'Farachain in poetry, and the question arises whether its absence is quite the advantage or, at any rate, the matter of indifference it could appear to be from the purely individualistic standpoint. Val Mulherns, in her survey of the up-and-coming in Irish letters, quotes Hemingway as saying: "All art is done by the individual. The individual is all you ever have, and all schools only serve to classify their members as failures." This attitude of disdain may well exist in America, where rugged individualism dies a hard death. But where in the annals of European art—and it is well to remind ourselves that we *are* in Europe—where would the marshals of the arts have been without the devotion, again and again how disinterested, the zeal and the good fighting-form of their squadrons?

THE EDITORS.



QUANTUM

HOW MUCH experience is enshrined in the 127 years of the House of Morgan it would be unprofitable to estimate. Suffice it that a tradition tradition has been established and enlarged—a skill in the matter of wine that no

MUTATUS

CHANGE in the superficialities of existence can impede. It is true to say that an ever increasing citizenry have learned to value the skill and integrity in the family business founded in 1825, which has taken such pains to preserve the personal touch and attention that was a hallmark of a more leisured age, and so

AB ILLO . . .

FROM THAT we bid the weary citizen—and the unweary—to sip a delectable wine from the cool cellars of the House of Morgan and truly feel “How greatly changed from what he was!”

The House of
MORGAN
36 Dawson Street
DUBLIN



O'K.-B.

MAURICE KENNEDY

THE CLIPPINGS OF TIN

MAY-BLOSSOM ON THE TANGLED THORN, AND BIRDS SINGING LIKE young angels, sun and soft breezes, and the days stretching into another long summer—although for that matter, God knows, I hadn't yet seen enough summers to get over the surprise of another year, to treat it as something expected and accustomed, instead of a whole new creation that might nevermore recur.

There were bees somewhere above my head, humming in the white candles on the heavy-leaved chestnut, where I sprawled along a wide twisted branch. Here was my retreat, hidden from below and sheltered from above, a kind of cool green cave. Some smaller branches had been torn away in a storm long ago. From outside, the space left behind was only a thinner place in the foliage, and you needed keen eyes to note the difference. But from my hideaway in the cradle of the branches, it was a window on the wide world. Through trailing leaves I could see the laneway straggling round a clump of trees and out of sight; I could see the tumbled folds of the hills around me; and far away, through a gap in the hills, I could see a blue mountain.

If I leaned out a little, I could see the yard below and the small field at the eastern gable of the house where the old horse grazed slowly. All the length of my short memory that horse had been old and slow, but now it was near the end. It was sway-backed and bony and bleary-eyed and dejected. For two years my uncle had been making up his mind to send it to the knackers for what it would fetch. But Uncle Jer was the laziest man living, and never attempted to do today what he could put off doing until after harvest. The farm had all the look of it, with ragged hedges and broken fences and tumble-down gates.

Now and again his brother Con would come over on a visit from the far side of the hill, but an hour of the farm would send him home in a fury. When he came across our haggart and saw a spade thrown carelessly in a ditch, its handle broken and tied clumsily with a wisp of binder-twine, its blade half-rotted with rust, he would shake his head and scowl, and stamp into the house with his hands stuck in his pockets and the spade under his oxtail. And then he would clatter it down in a corner, and sit silently on the hob with his pipe rammed in his jaw and clouds of smoke for conversation for an hour or so. And every little while he'd look around at the smoke-blackened walls of our house, and shake his head and sigh.

"Wouldn't you put a hand to that roof, Jer, now the fine

weather is here?" he might say at last, each word bitten out as though he grudged it. "A Christian can't sit at the hob in winter without getting the drop down the back of his neck."

"Ah, what matter," Jer would say, "sure God is good!"

And that would madden Con so much that he'd go out without another word, and you could hear him welting stones before him with an ashplant all the way up the lane. Beneath it all, Con had a heart of gold, and between his liking for his brother and his hatred of untidiness, the whole thing was too much for his feelings. And Jer, thanks to the goodness of God, never wanted a bite to eat or a stitch to wear or a roof to sleep under. And the old horse still grazed in the little field by the gable. "Leave things alone," said Jer, "and they'll turn out right in the end."

I could see him below me now, leaning on the gate and whistling. There was work to be done, but it would do as well tomorrow, and meanwhile he rested in the sun and thought about the mysteries of life and the wonders of the growth of crops.

And then, faint at first, we heard the sound of carts coming down the lane. We put no mark on it, though it was seldom anyone passed that way. Uncle Jer didn't look up at all even when the three cart-loads of tinkers came creaking round the bend. Flat carts, with ungreaed axles and gaps in the floorboards, and half a dozen wild-looking tinkers sprawled in each cart, not one of them with a whole shoe to his foot or a whole coat to his back. A high-stepping long-maned pony pranced on a leading-rope at the tail of the procession, and the whole caravan slowed down at our gate. They stayed silent there a little while, half of them asleep on the heaps of rubbish in the carts, the rest with one eye on the sky and the other in sidelong glances at our house.

"Morra' there," said the driver of the first cart, a swarthy scarecrow with the bones showing through the tatters of his shirt, "A quare class of a day."

"'Tis, begod," said Jer, without much interest.

"I suppose," said the tinker, with his eyes screwed up against the light as he stared at a little cloud, "you wouldn't be thinking of selling that old horse beyant in the field?"

I could see by the cut of his shoulders that Uncle Jer was thinking hard. "I might," said he, "if the price was right."

"Would you be inclined to mention what price you might be expecting?" asked the tinker.

Uncle Jer pulled at his right ear. "Four pounds and not a penny less," he said firmly.

"Arrah, will you go on to hell outa that, man," said the tinker in a tone of horror, "that animal isn't worth ten shillings with the straddle and breechings thrown in! But seeing that you're a Christian man that has had, be the looks of you, his share of hardship, I'll offer you fifteen bob."

"If you're inclined for joking," said my uncle, "you can

go down to the village and try your jokes on the sergeant. But go on out of this and don't be disturbing my day on me."

The tinker whistled a snatch of a tune, and inspected the sole of his shoe as if surprised to find it hanging loose. "Looks like thunder," he said.

"It does, faith," said my uncle. He scrutinised the sky carefully. "Did I hear you say two pounds ten?" he asked, after a decent interval.

"You did not," said the tinker slowly, "I said one pound and that's my last offer."

"Nonsense," said my uncle. "If I took a penny less than two pounds I'd be the mock of the six parishes. Go on now and trouble others—and keep that pony from eating my hedge."

"Here's my very last offer," said the tinker, "and I won't put a tooth in it. I'll split the differ at thirty bob. Take it or leave it."

My uncle pulled at his ear again. The old horse was no more than skin and bone. Two pounds we might get from the knackers, but there was the day wasted travelling, and the travelling itself, tramping along a lonely road. I could see the laziness getting the upper hand, by the wriggle he gave his shoulders.

"I'll take it so," he said, "though it goes hard with me, but I always had a kind of soft feeling for the travelling people. Give me the money in my fist, and then away with you."

One of the women got down from a cart, carrying a length of tarry rope with which she fashioned a rough bridle for the horse and coaxed the animal out on the road, to be tied beside the wild-eyed pony. The tinker hitched at his rags and produced a small handful of silver. He counted it slowly, audibly, slapped the coins into my uncle's palm, curled the fingers over the money, and clinched the deal with a ringing smack on the weighted fist. My uncle turned and went into the house, and I could hear the coins jingle as he dropped them into the lustre jug on the dresser.

The tinkers, who up to now had been lackadaisical and aimless, scrambled back onto the carts with surprising speed, and began to rattle away down the lane at a fast trot. They had almost reached the next bend before my uncle had got back to his place at the gate. And then the old horse stumbled and went down, and the pony stumbled, and the procession came to an abrupt stop. The pony kicked out in all directions and struggled to its feet, but the old horse never stirred. The weary heart had stopped at last, and old bones had come to rest.

My uncle stood there dumbfounded, looking at this calamity. But the tinkers were not dumbfounded. Someone whistled shrilly and the whole troop of them tumbled off the carts and faced us, and every man-jack of them had a short knife in his hand. The sun flamed wickedly on the shifting blades.

For once, my uncle overcame his laziness. He went across the yard in the first startled movement, and round the gable of

the house, and the last I saw of him was going up the rocky field in long jumps like a mountain hare with the hounds after it. He never looked back, even when he crossed the skyline.

The tinkers weren't paying the least attention to my uncle. They gathered round the horse's carcass and the sharp knives went to work. By the time I had shinned down to the ground they had the hide in a bundle with a rope round it, and the old horse was a mound of bones and raw flesh, lying in the middle of the lane in a pool of blood that soaked slowly into the earth.

I stood there watching them as they loaded the bundle on one of the carts, and they took no notice of me. There was a heap of lead scraps in the cart, and near them a curious box that seemed to be made from two thick slabs of wood, with nails in the sides and a sort of funnel running into it.

"What's that?" I asked.

The scarecrow leaned over the side of the cart and leered at me. "It's a wheedawdle for catching crickets," he said, "and sometimes we do use it for cutting the noses off small boys that ask questions." And then they were away down the lane.

I stood watching them until they were out of sight. Then I took the sheep-track over the hill, puzzling in my mind about how one could catch crickets in a box. And what was the use of catching crickets, that did no harm? And what would tinkers know about crickets anyway, when they never lived in houses?

On the shoulder of the hill was a small ivy-covered ruin. A family had lived there in my grandfather's day, but they went to America in the bad times, and the house fell down. Nettles grew in the angle of a crumbling wall, and a gnarled elder-bush blocked the ruined doorway. You could make whistles out of the hollowed twigs, but you never used an elder-branch as a stick. If you struck anyone with an elder-branch, he would never grow bigger. You could not use one for herding cattle, or even goats that had the devil in them. Judas hanged himself on an elder-bush.

Beyond the ruin the hill flattened out into a long stretch of level moorland. The sheep-track wandered here and there, but if you tried to take a short cut you might twist your leg in the uneven ground among the tufts of rushes and heather, where the wind sighed sadly. The clouds were coming up, and it was growing darker. The wind blew more strongly, in fitful gusts.

On the other side of the hill, sheltered by hawthorns, was a deep, clear well. A great trout lived in the well, and had lived there for generations, or so they said. There was a story about the trout and a saint, but it had been forgotten. Except that they said the trout could not be killed or eaten.

Once the trout had actually been captured in a bucket by a queer old fellow who lived in a mud-walled cabin a piece down the track, scrabbling a living of sorts from snaring rabbits. He hungered for that trout, he said, for it was a long time since he had tasted anything but rabbit and potatoes, potatoes and rabbit ;

but the memory of the half-remembered story came back to him and he feared to kill the trout with his hands. So he hung the bucket on the crane and reddened up the fire, and sat there with his feet to the blaze while he smoked a pipe. By that time the flames were going up around the bucket and the rim of the metal was a dull red like a horseshoe on an anvil. But when he stood up and looked into the bucket there wasn't a bubble in the water and the old trout was swimming around at its ease.

With that, the old fellow made out the door and spent the long cold night tramping the hill, and when he came back in the morning the bucket was on its side on the floor, and the fire was black out, and fin or fragment of the trout was not to be seen. But when he went back to the well next day, there was the trout's tail waving back at him from beneath a great stone.

That was before my time. Now there was nothing left of the old man but a handful of bones in a churchyard, nor of the cabin but a bare patch on the side of the hill. But the trout, they said, still lived in the well. I lay flat on the ground and looked into the clear depths, and though I strained my eyes I could see nothing but a small swirl of mud stirred up from the bottom.

There was a scurry of wind that blew leaves into the well and ruffled the surface, and I couldn't see the bottom any more. Clouds were all over the sky, and streaks of lightning glimmered behind the hills. Clumps of heather began to sigh to themselves, and a couple of big drops of rain came down. I skeltered away down the track as fast as I could, and took the short cut across the meadow with my head turned sideways watching for the bull. There was an almighty clap of thunder while I scrambled over the wall of Uncle Con's back yard, and the rain came sheeting down the minute I reached the shelter of the eaves. When I turned round I could hardly see the other side of the yard.

They were talking inside while I stood there watching the rain hopping up in little fountains and the puddle in the middle of the yard growing bigger all the time. The thunder was so loud I couldn't hear them at first. All I could make out was that Uncle Con seemed to be in a flaming temper.

"May Hell roast every tinker from here to Dublin!" he said, at the top of his voice.

I began to dabble with my bare toes in the mud of the yard, making channels and little lakes for the rain to fill. Three hens watched me gloomily from the open outhouse door. The pool in the middle of the yard was growing gradually, and suddenly it slid in a thin sheet over the threshold of the outhouse, catching the hens unaware. They squawked angrily and fluttered back into the inner darkness, and then their outcry was lost in the rolling of thunder as the storm-centre passed overhead.

The thunder grew slowly more faint. For an instant the rain stopped, and a mad rampage of wind came round the gable of the house, driving waves across the flooded yard. I could

hear my uncles cursing inside as the smoke fanned back down the chimney. Then the wind dropped as suddenly as it had risen, and the rain came down again, but this time more slowly, more steadily, more thickly. It might rain now for an hour or a day or a week. I turned and went through the doorway.

Con was bending over the hearth, reddening his pipe with a splinter of wood, and Jer was leaning back comfortably on the hob, watching scattered raindrops come down the chimney and hiss in the flames. The firelight leaped on his face. I thought he was smiling, but I couldn't be sure.

"A week!" said Jer. "Do you mean to tell me you had the tinkers around here for a week and done nothing about it?"

"Arra, man, what could I do? I threatened 'em with the pitchfork and they just laughed at me. They tried to sell me two shovels and a pickaxe they found in the outhouse. They broke my hedges and knocked my walls and scared the wits out of the sheepdog, and they stole the butter and a clutch of eggs and a set of harness and a churn."

"Why didn't you send for the police?" asked Jer.

"Will you have sense, man. Sure who would I send, and not a Christian living within six miles, barring yourself? And anyway the police want no truck with them since last New Year's Eve, when the two tribes were fighting at Egan's Bridge, and they joined together against the police and threw them into the river. After that the Sergeant said it was a job for the Army and he'd be damned if he laid a hand on a tinker on this side of the grave, and he hoped he wouldn't meet them beyond it. I mentioned the police one day the lot of them were lounging in the yard, to see what effect it would have, and I had to put the dresser against the door to keep them out—and even then they took the half-door off its hinges and made a bonfire out of it. And that night they put a sod of grass on top of the chimney and I was near suffocated with the smoke before I managed to quench the fire. I was near a raving lunatic, God forgive me, before they left."

"But why did they leave at all? It must have been their idea of heaven."

"I believe they knew I was getting desperate. I was so bad it made no differ between living in misery under the weight of a tribe of tinkers, and dying brave in the heat of one fearful blow. I looked out the little window one morning and there was a bunch of them up in the half-acre, at the last haycock. Not pulling an armful of hay out of it, mind you. They had ropes around it, and they were trying to pull the whole thing up onto a cart! My blood rose at that, and out the door with me and up the field, yelling like a madman, with the billhook in one fist and the shotgun in the other. They scattered in front of me and I followed them up the hill, but I couldn't catch any of them and the shotgun wasn't loaded. I looked down from the top of the hill and I saw the parade of them coming out the door of the house, and I nearly

cut my throat on the spot for being such a bloody fool as to stir out of the house for the sake of a haycock. By the time I got back there wasn't a sign of them anywhere. Nor of the clock, nor the trace-rope, or the mirror was in the room. Nor the five pounds in shiny silver. It's a wonder they missed the lining of the mattress, and the box I have buried under the hearthstone. Maybe they didn't get time. But I'd give them time. I'd give them a million, million years to roast in hell!"

"Whisht, man, whisht," said Jer, "you'll frighten the boy with your shouting and swearing. You had it hard, to be sure, but 'tis all over now, and they'll hardly come back this way for a while once you took the shotgun to them."

Not a word out of either of them after that, Con staring at the fire like a man had lost his senses, and Jer sitting back in the corner and choking over his pipe every now and again.

The sky in the morning was the colour of a duck-egg, with thin streams of cloud trailing up and away. Rain-drops sparkled on the grass and the hawthorns and the leaves of young strawberries, tiny and curled and tender as a baby's fingers. Birds were singing. We went over the hill in silence, Uncle Jer walking slowly with bent head, myself skipping through the puddles and pulling the leaves of dog-roses to send down a sudden cool shower.

I told him about the tinkers taking the skin off the old horse. He thought about it for a minute.

"Sure, of course," he said, "the hide alone was worth the money. And I thinking it was *me* they were going to skin. But a good run is better than a bad stand, and I hadn't my run for nothing all the same." He began to laugh. "God forgive me," he said, "but I can't have pity for that man that was always so cranky and crabbed, though he is my own brother itself. And the best of it is that the thirty bob I got for the old horse probably came out of Con's cash-box. Not that I'm going to tell him. He has enough, and more, besides, and 'tisn't good for a man to have too much. He forgets God's goodness."

I threw a stone at a rabbit that was taking the air. It didn't go within ten feet of the rabbit, but it frightened a wren out of a bush. Next Christmas I was going out with the wren-boys, running on the hill with the frost on the fields and streamers pinned to my jacket. The grass was drying under the sun, and a grasshopper began to chirrup softly. I remembered something.

"Uncle Jer," I said, "how would you go about catching crickets with a wheedawdle?" He stopped, with one foot on top of the stile.

"With a *what*?" he asked.

"A wheedawdle for catching crickets," I explained, "that's what the tinker said it was. A small wooden box, with nails sticking out of it. I couldn't see how you'd catch crickets with it."

"Oh my God!" said Uncle Jer, jumping over the stile and running down the lane. I trotted after him, but he was inside the house before I reached the yard gate. I heard the furniture

being thrown about, and then a jug breaking on the flagstones, and Jer came running out the door with his eyes wild. He tore off his cap and threw it in the mud of the yard and jumped on it. He had the tinker's coins in his hand. He put one in his teeth and twisted it and it bent double. Then another. Then another. He threw them down. The hens were clucking in the corner under the tree. He threw the handful of coins at the hens and they scattered noisily, flying on to the top of the outhouse.

"Pewter," he said, and his voice strangled with fury, "pewter every damn one of them." He stretched his hands over his head and turned his face up to the sky. "Oh God," he said, "may Hell roast every tinker from here to Dublin."

The hens flew back into the yard and pecked at the shiny pieces of metal, already beginning to sink into the mud and slush. I slipped away into the tree out of sight and harm's way.

Jer picked up one of the coins and walked over to lean his elbows on the gate. He polished the coin on his sleeve, and the sun winked from it. "Me lovely ould horse," he said. I thought first he was coughing. Then that he was choking. At last I realised that he was actually laughing. He looked down the lane at the heap of bones and blue entrails. A jackdaw was perched on top of the heap, pecking vigorously. Jer lifted his hand, the false coin sparkled through the air, and the jackdaw flew away.

I could see a swarm of bluebottles circling in the air over the carcase. A whisper of wind came up the lane. Jer sniffed once or twice and then jerked up his head all of a sudden. The thunderstorm hadn't done the old horse much good. We could smell it quite plainly already and it was growing stronger all the time in the heat of the sun.

Jer walked slowly around the gable of the house, and came back yet more slowly carrying a spade and a crowbar and a length of rope. God forgive him, but he was a lazy man. He looked around for me, but I stayed quietly out of sight among the leaves. After a while he went down the lane with dragging footsteps, and began to dig a hole in the soft ground of the potato-patch on the windward side of the carcase. It took him a long time. Then he tied a rope round the carcase, as well as he could, with his face twisted round so far that he looked as if his neck was dislocated. He began the long job of pulling the carcase off the lane, over the ditch, and across the potato patch into the hole. His heels slipped on the ground, and the sweat streamed from him. His language became worse and worse until he lost his breath and only groaned and grunted. I couldn't bear to watch him any longer.

I looked up and away through the branches, far away over the green fields and the brown fields and the long golden fields, over the river and the bare bogland and the small plantations with each its plume of smoky vapour rising into the heat of noon, over the wide and hazy spaces to the mountain that looked as big as the world's end. And then I fell asleep, and dreamed of honey.

SEAN LUCY

THE TALKER

CON BRADY WAS KNOWN BY THE OTHER MEN IN HIS COMPANY AS "the Talker," but the name was a compliment rather than a sneer, because talking was his job.

There would be a meeting in the dark kitchen of a mountainy farm and the plans for the next raid or ambush would be discussed. William Burke, the commandant, thickset and dark, would listen to the swift speech of the younger men and then, slowly and with certainty, he would shape a complete, trustworthy plan in the active minds of the others. Afterwards he would turn to Con.

"Con, boy, we don't know what that platoon of the Essex is doin' in Ballingeary. They may be wise to us. Will you try an' find out, lad?"

Con had this job because of his college education: his ability to appear the semi-anglicised West Briton. Also, he looked anything but a rebel—a gangling youth with fair hair and a way of looking you straight in the face while he softly told the most atrocious lies. He would turn up in the danger spot riding a bicycle and wearing a bowler and gloves: the young Cork city clerk out for the day. He also carried an umbrella strapped to his cross-bar. No Englishman will suspect disloyalty in the possessor of gloves and an umbrella.

He would dismount in the village street and walk up to the officer standing uneasily near his men—men who formed little suspicious groups in the silent roadway.

"Nice day, captain. Your men look a smart lot. Hope this doesn't mean any damned rebels in the area?"

"No, just routine. I don't expect trouble. Still you never know with those bastards. Got to be bloody careful."

"Well, you men are doing a fine job. It's nice to see you keeping an eye on things. Cigarette? We'll soon have these rebels put down with your help. Only a bunch of hooligans against you. The Irish people disown them really, you know."

"Still, they get a lot of passive help round the country. It would be easier for us if there weren't so much sympathy."

"Well, let's hope it will soon be over. I must be off. Got to be in Cork before curfew, you know. I suppose you'll be going to Macroom for the night?"

"Yes, we move in half-an-hour. Nice to meet someone friendly. Good luck."

"Good luck."

In summer the mountains, tall around the road, shook in the heat as the straggling villages dropped behind. Dust and warm

smells of gorse and heather. In the winter, mud, mist, and thin rain. But always the farm again and Burke's curt: "Well?"

"Two platoons under a captain, Sir. Two lorries. Returning to Macroom. That should make our way to Skibb. clear."

"Fine. We'll go to-night. But I've another job for you, Con, boy. Go up to the City to-morrow. There's a rumour that new troops are arriving, and I don't trust Hegarty to let us know if any are moving West. Stay here to-night, lad."

It was always like that. It wasn't that Con wanted to fight, but he felt lost and detached. Sometimes the lying talk with the puzzled, angry British troops seemed to infect his soul with the treason he mouthed to them. He acted so wholeheartedly that, as he talked to this officer or that, he became the "loyal" small-minded clerk. He laughed fiercely sometimes, remembering, with bitterness, what he had said to some Englishman under the shadow of his own hills. For there was no doubt in his mind that he was on the right side. Many of the Irish fighters were fools—and worse; some were narrow-minded to an extent that appalled him; but they were all seeking a true thing. Under different forms it was seen by them but it was a true thing.

And Con stayed on the outskirts in a misty region of words, hating the ambiguity, the dirtiness of his soft talk with the British. He was afraid of fighting, but he would have preferred it.

Once he had fought. By himself on a mountain in the cool clarity of a summer evening he had shot three soldiers, who had been sent by a suspicious Major to follow him on bicycles. By the time he noticed them on the road behind him he was too near headquarters to give them the slip with safety. So he had hidden his bike and ambushed them. One he had shot on the road, and as the other two came up the hill towards his rock he had shot them too, with extraordinary ease. Then in a nightmare half-hour he had dragged bodies and bicycles to a deep flooded turf-cutting, half hidden by overhanging heather, and had dropped them in. The dark land swallowed his enemies forever, and held them secretly. He also was secret, telling no one. He was ashamed because he had forgotten to take their rifles and ammunition. Also he was haunted by the memory of blood and of the brown water of the cutting, and preferred to tend his sore imagination in silence.

The summer of the blackest fighting came and in the first week of July the Column moved in on Cork City. Most came in as private individuals, somehow finding friends or relations to stay with in the West and South-West of the town. Headquarters, with most of the arms, was in a big deserted house near the small village of Waterfall, which lies in a hollow below its little chapel, about three miles South-West of the City. Something big had been planned, and Burke's Column was to take part. Only Burke himself had some idea of what was supposed to happen. Whatever it was it was taking a long time. Two weeks and still nothing, with Burke worrying about the discipline of his scattered men.

Con's father had died two months before, and the rent of the rooms in Cockpit Lane had lapsed, so at first Con didn't know where he would stay. He did not wish to ask any of his college friends, partly because he was poor and proud, and partly because he didn't want to mix the two worlds which he lived in: the I.R.A. and the University. Surrounded by the atmosphere of one, the other always seemed as unreal as a dream, the legend of which, though strong in the heart, had nothing to do with living.

Stephanie Forde, the girl he was in love with, belonged to the world of the University. She loved him too and there were times when they seemed perfectly at one in their love. Yet he had not told her where he went when he disappeared from Cork for months on end. Her father, a well-to-do Cork doctor with the conservatism of his class, accepted him rather grudgingly as a possible future son-in-law, and her mother openly liked him. And it was at the Forde's house in the Western Road that he finally stayed, when they discovered that he had nowhere to go.

"I suppose we couldn't let you starve in the street," shouted Dr. Forde, pompously humorous.

In the evenings, except on Friday when he cycled out to Waterfall by the back road, he helped Stephanie with work for her B.A. exam., which was coming soon. They would sit at the table in the dark Victorian diningroom surrounded by books while the evening grew quiet in the tree-lined Mardyke outside the window and the darkening line of the hill above Sunday's Well marked its roads and houses with soft lights.

Stephanie was small and dark and unpredictable, and he loved her more all the time. She would work in great fiery bursts, completely unlike his steady concentrated study. Sometimes he would watch her dark head bent stiffly over the page or her small brown hand charge up and down the lines with her green pen held in what seemed a hopeless cramped position, answering her questions. Sometimes he would talk to her of the wonders of poetry and of high drama, and forget all with his mind except the dancing of the stately images, only his heart always remembering her presence. And often they would do no work at all, but make love and love talk in the summer dusk.

Inevitably he told her about his job with the I.R.A. after a week of her company. To her it sounded like a brave and clever game, because he unconsciously acted the part of the daring spy to her as he told her. Of the three men in the bog cutting he said nothing. He thought, wrongly, that though his love was a rabid republican she would prefer to be spared the nastier things of war.

Her approval made him forget the reality of his I.R.A. life, and while he was with her his petty spying seemed to him also a gallant adventure. Only when he reported to Burke at Waterfall on Friday evenings did the degrading reality weigh on him, and in consequence his admiration of his leader gave way to resentment and dislike. The practical details which constantly engaged

Burke's attention seemed small and mean now.

"No signs of special activity, Con?"

"No, Sir, nothing."

"O'Malley and Lehane were arrested the other day for being out after curfew. They were drunk. Did you hear that?"

"No, sir."

"Luckily they weren't carrying guns and they're all right. They swear they gave nothing away. That's all for to-day, Con; you can go now. Keep your eyes open, lad."

"Yes, sir. Thanks, sir."

Stephanie of course wanted to help him.

"Con, couldn't I do something to help? I'm sure I could find out things for you."

Automatically he smiled the smile of the man who could find out anything, by himself—the master spy.

"Ah, I know the ropes pretty well. There isn't anything you could do that I couldn't do just as well myself."

"But I could go to dances that the British officers were at and get them to tell me things. Like the Countess Corteza in *The Tangled Web*."

"You could in my foot! Don't let me see or hear of you dancing with any bloody Englishmen."

Besides his anger and anxiety there was a growing subconscious fear of letting the realities of his two worlds meet. This fear was his nightmare. It was a senseless and vile terror.

* * *

It was a dry hot summer evening with an oppressive ceiling of low pearl-grey clouds. The small city was still with the stillness of lethargy. Fine dust lay on the pavements, and on the leaves of trees unstirred by wind.

The doctor was up at the Bon Secours. Mrs. Forde was out. It was the girl's half-day. After tea Stephanie and Con, with the house to themselves, were trying to do some serious study.

Someone knocked authoritatively on the front door. "I'll go," said Con. He kissed her on the forehead and going out into the hall he opened the door. Facing him was the tall Major who had sent the three men after him in the mountains. Behind him a section of Tans. He looked hard at Con for a very long minute.

"Is Dr. Forde in?"

"No. I'm terribly sorry, he won't be home for about two hours." Con's voice rang loud and unreal in his own ears. "Could I give him a message?"

"What is it, Con?" Stephanie came out of the dining room. She stiffened when she saw the uniforms. Her face became stubborn and hostile. Con noticed with a distant part of his mind that she didn't even look pretty then. Hard and sharp.

"The Major is looking for your father," said Con. He was conscious that he was smiling diffidently. The old habit.

The Major saluted Stephanie awkwardly. "Miss Forde? I

have been instructed to question your father about a man who died while he was attending to him. A wounded man. But, if your father is out, to-morrow will do. It's only routine."

He talked in a rather dead voice, and as he did his eyes moved again to Con's face, puzzling his memory with familiarity. Con smiled vacantly at him.

"I think you'd better call to-morrow," said Stephanie flatly.

"Right. Thank you, Miss Forde." Then, slowly, to Con, "I've seen you before. Can't place you though."

"Probably around the city," suggested Con. He tried to talk lightly, but the words seemed heavy and slow.

"I don't think so," said the Major. "I was stationed on Macroom until last week." He paused, his eyes distant. Then suddenly he turned full on Con shooting a question.

"Know Waterfall?"

The familiar name shocked Con. But this was his game. The Major was not certain of him. He was trying to snare him.

"Waterfall," he said thoughtfully, "yes, I believe I do, Major. A small place four miles or so from here. About south-west I should think. Why?" Push the questioning back at the bastard.

"Oh, nothing much. Just that we heard there were some rebels skulking there. South-west, four miles, you say?"

A poor cover-up, this seeking for information.

"Yes. I think so. One of the turns off the Bandon road if I remember rightly. Sorry to hear that those rascals are so close. I hope you deal with them, Major."

"If they're there we'll get them all right. Thank you, Miss Forde. I'll call on your father to-morrow. Good evening."

Con closed the door quietly and stood for a minute looking at nothing, feeling Stephanie's anger in the dark hall.

"Come into the dining room before you talk," he said.

Beside the table she turned on him in anger. He was glad it was anger and not scorn with a cold hard face.

"Con, how could you! Sucking up to that man, with a soft voice and talk of 'rebels'. And telling where Waterfall was!"

Con felt that she was very, very far away. Out of touch. He fought with this feeling, trying to be aware of her view.

"To answer you categorically," he said stiffly. "First, as I've explained before, they've got to be lulled by 'loyalty'—"

"Yes," she said, "but not like *that*!"

He felt like asking her how it was to be done then, but he knew it would be no good so he went on:

"Second. I had met him before and got information out of him, and he nearly remembered me." He would have liked to tell her about the three soldiers now, but she would not believe it. It seemed so unreal he hardly believed it himself.

"Thirdly, he knew where Waterfall was. He was testing me. Our company H.Q. is, or was, there. Somebody split on us."

"Your headquarters is there?" her voice was high.

"Well, anyway, it was, but I expect the British are either on their way there now or else they raided it last night. It's not far. It's the place I go to report on Fridays." He sat down heavily.

"But, Con," said Stephanie, looking at him in angry astonishment, "surely you're going to do something. Surely you're not just going to sit there!"

A great weariness came over Con. He seemed anchored forever to the hard chair and the soft carpet, in the dark room with her anger and ignorance. But he forced himself to speak.

"Arra, do what girl?" he said. "Even if they're not there yet, they'll have the place surrounded and the roads watched. It's no good, I'm telling you."

"So you're not going to try and warn them?"

"No," he said, "I'm not that foolish."

She gave him a dark look and left the room. He heard her go upstairs and then come down to the hall again. The coatstand rocked on the loose board. He went out uneasily. She was standing in the hall with her coat on.

"Where do you think you're going?" he asked.

"To Waterfall, of course. If you're frightened to go I must then. I know my duty."

"Ah, for God's sake, Stephanie, don't be stupid," he said despairingly. "If there was a dog's chance I'd go myself." He took hold of her arm, but she jerked it away, flicking her dark hair across her cheek as she did.

"I'm going."

He stared at her white face and saw she meant it. His hands felt heavy with shame and anger. Suddenly he shrugged.

"Take off your coat, Stephanie, I'll go myself on the bike."

"You won't just pretend to go?"

"I swear to God I'll go."

"Ah, I knew you'd see I was right," she said joyfully. "We have to try and save them. But you'll be careful won't you, Con? You'll go by the back lanes?"

He choked back bitter words.

"I'll be fine," he said in a still voice. "And now don't say anymore. I'll go now and it will be dark when I get there."

She might as well have shot me now, he thought.

Yet there was a certain liberation in action. He went up to his room and put on a raincoat. Into the pocket he pushed his revolver. He tucked his trouser ends in his socks, went to the lavatory, and then came downstairs. Stephanie was waiting in the hall. She was rather pale and she gave him a soft fierce kiss.

He held her shoulders and looked at her. His feelings were a confusion of irritation and despairing sadness.

"I love you," he said, kissed her between the eyes, and went out the back way to get his bike.

It was a quarter to eight. Curfew began at the hour. That gave him plenty of time to get out of the city if he wasn't stopped.

He would go out the Lee Road and come back carefully on Waterfall from the North-West, using the side roads. By the time the City was behind him he had almost forgotten the risk he was running. On his left the Lee ran softly through quiet evening fields where where cattle moved as if in sleep under the grey sky. Beyond the river low hills half-covered with trees. On the right the wooded slope of Mount Desert rose steeply. It was very quiet.

After a while the road climbed sidling up the hill into the pillared green of a beech wood. Here Con waited for half an hour. He did not want to get to Waterfall before dark. He sat without thought in the stillness of the trees watching the river grow faintly luminous in the gathering twilight of the valley.

Then he moved on, going with more speed and care. It was nearly dark when he came over the top of the little hill opposite the house. He stopped and watched. The house was quiet among its trees ; no light in any window ; not a sound. After ten minutes he went down the road and left his bicycle in a field. Then he walked up the dark lane to the gate. Still nothing. Either he was in time to warn Burke or else the Commandant had already been given the word and was gone.

In the gloom he saw that the windows of the front room which Burke used were still shuttered and that the front door stood as usual a little ajar. He slipped into the hall. A faint crack of candle-light showed under the door of Burke's room. In time, he thought, and opening the door he walked in.

A British captain was sitting behind the table with the candle-light on his tired young face ; behind him two soldiers covered Con with their rifles.

"Put your hands up," said the captain quietly.

He obeyed, his mind blank with surprise.

"Search him," said the captain.

A big bull of a man moved out of the shadows and frisked Con's pockets with heavy red hands. He grunted as he felt the revolver, pulled it out, broke it and put it on the table.

"I was told that you might come," said the captain in a hard voice. "You are accused of spying for the rebels." He half turned in his chair and shouted in a petulant voice : "Lieutenant Gregg ! Lieutenant Gregg !"

A tall subaltern with a round pale face blundered through the door from the inner room, and obeying a sign from the captain sat down at the table beside him.

"Well ?" said the captain to Con, "have you anything to say ?"

Con felt the futility of it ; but he fumbled automatically for words. Just as he opened his mouth to speak the captain said rapidly : "The rebels who were hiding here got away before we arrived. You probably know where they are. Perhaps you know of others too." His voice grew slower, wearily emphatic. "If you give us any information leading to the finding of these men, especially

their leaders, I have been instructed to tell you that you stand a good chance of getting off with a prison sentence." His drawn face looked curiously at Con.

By now Con had got over the shock of being caught, but fear stirred under his surface thoughts. Burke and the men had got away. Someone had talked. He felt deserted. His comrades seemed remote. He became aware of a great useless longing for peace, for Stephanie, for his books. Burke and Ireland could go to hell. He knew enough to get himself free. And not a soul need know. He raised his heavy eyes. What he saw was the captain's face full of a tired bullying eagerness. Stupid, and confident that he could get what he wanted. A terrible anger came up in Con's chest: anger at this pushing stupidity and bullying confidence in the small tired man at the table.

"You can all go to hell," he said in a high shaking voice. And then lower and firmer, "You can all go to hell."

There was a short silence.

"Very well," said the captain in an expressionless voice. "Gregg, detail a section. You will be in charge, Sergeant-Major."

The moon-faced lieutenant went through into the next room. A soft voice in there said, "Draw cards."

"You're sure you've nothing to tell us?" said the captain in the same meaningless voice.

Con said nothing. He stared at the swaying bulk of one of the soldiers behind the table. He should try to pray. He crossed himself quickly and clumsily, his eyes moving to the candle on the table. He tried to think of Stephanie but all he could remember was a rather ugly bracelet that she often wore.

The pale face of the captain moved near the brown face of the sergeant-major with low earnest words. Feet scraped on the floor as six soldiers filed into the room. Indistinct in the shadows.

"Right, Sergeant-Major."

"Right, Sir."

Their bodies moved around him. He turned with them and walked out into the dark. The door closed.

The young captain still sat at the table looking at his hands. Voices moved in the next room.

After about three minutes the rifles shattered the night outside. No pistol shot.

The sergeant-major came in quietly.

"Sir."

"We stay here to-night. Post fresh sentries and see that the men get food and perhaps some tea. I don't want any."

"Yes, Sir," the voice had a note of solicitude which irritated the young captain. "Goodnight, Sir."

The captain did not answer.

And after the lieutenant had turned in, he still sat with his elbows on the scratched boards of the table, staring at the white candle flame, on the black twist of the wick. So clear. So bright.

EOIN NEESON

BOTTLES AND OLD BONES

PADNA SAT PROPPED UP IN THE BED LIKE AN OLD WOMAN, GLARING at us out of two watery, yellow eyes that looked like a pair of fried eggs floating in a bucket of water.

"You know me, Dan," he told my father.

"I do, Padna, I do," said me da from the door.

"You know me," said Padna again, "an' did you ever know me to do a mean thing or a dishonourable action in me life?"

"I did not, Padna, I did not, boy," said me da.

"An' I never did, neither!" said Padna. "Mind dat now!" He glared at me da.

"Lissen ta me, now," he went on as me da was about to agree with him again, "I'm a dyin' man!"

My father hung his head sorrowfully.

"I'm a dyin' man, an' I'm puttin' it on you, Dan, an' the rest of me friends to see I goes decent."

"There's no need for you to worry your head about that, Padna; you have no lack of friends. An' if I was to do it with me own bare hands, I'd see you went like you deserve."

"You're a nobleman, Dan," said the old man in the bed, scowling at me father, "a good man, an' a sound man. And good bye t'ye now, an' bring the boy t'see me agin."

With that he disappeared into the bedclothes in dismissal. Only his nose could be seen.

"Oul shtock," said me da viciously, and we went.

But as it happened I never did go to see Padna again, for he died suddenly two days later!

My father was naturally upset when he heard, and after paying his respects to the corpse he called an extraordinary meeting of the Watergreenhill Harriers Committee—which consisted of all the harriers.

"Boys," he said solemnly when they were assembled, "I have bad news for ye. Padna Crowley is dead!" They were amazed, horrified, surprised.

"Yes," said me da, "yeer founder member is dead!" They cocked their ears; mention of his office presaged further news.

"But worse than that," said me da. "He put it on us to see he was buried."

Consternation! Protests and objections poured from the harriers as stout from a newly tapped barrel. But me da was equal to the occasion.

"He made us responsible for his decent burial," he said, "an' if we don't do it we'll be the laughing stock of the parish."

There was a pause. The harriers shifted uncomfortably in their seats, and wished they belonged to the Blackpool Beagles or some other sensible organisation that didn't divide harrying with amateur undertaking. Eventually one of them said:

"Of course Dan, I feels the same as you—."

"We all do," came the chorus.

"But," went on the speaker, "a funeral costs money, an'—."

"Boys" said me da, "boys! I'm ashamed of ye!" He paused and looked pityingly at them. "Do ye call ye'reselves men at all?" he asked. "A harrier—the founder member of yeer club has died, and ye are going against his last wishes and denying him a funeral. I don't know what ta think of ye at all. I only hope that when yeer time comes there's them'll think more kindly of ye."

Against this kind of appeal no argument could prevail. They passed round the hat. The result was staggering: over £20.

"God lads," said me da, "there's a bloody pah-treecian here amongst us somewhere, thank God. I knew ye had it in ye."

"Twenty pounds!" gasped Mogwah Daly. "They'd bury the king of England for less!"

"An' what about Padna, isn't he better than any king, an' more deserving of a good funeral?" demanded a harrier.

"Oh, he is, he is," put in Mogwah hurriedly, "but—meaning no disrespect to Padna, God rest his sowl," and he raised his eyes piously heavenwards, "'twouldn't be fittin' to spend that amount of money buryin' him, and have nothing to honour his memory ourselves, barrin' the stone we put on his chest ta hould him down."

"What," asked me da suspiciously, "d'ye mean, Mogwah? What are yeh suggestin'?"

"Nottin' that Padna himself wouldn't approve of an' want us t'do," Mogwah, the capricious one, gravely hastened to assure him. "Only I never heard yet of a decent burial that hadn't a wake ta launch it."

"Be the Holy God," said me da slapping his thigh, "you're right there. There's enough here ta bury the poor fella twice—God rest his soul—an' what'd be more fittin' to his memory but to have a wake an' to send him off in the shtyle he'd like best?"

While this reflected on the sobriety of the living Padna, it couldn't be denied that it was a popular notion with the harriers.

Several were despatched on the necessary errands and I was packed off to the nearest fish and chip shop with a large order.

When I returned I found the clubhouse transformed. Two long trestle tables, and a couple of kitchen ones commandeered from the houses of two of the harriers whose wives were absent, had been moved to the centre of the hall where they formed a large and rickety T. This T was covered with three sheets—likewise borrowed—which were in turn being rapidly decorated with a multitude of bottles willingly de-crated and de-cartoned by the loving hands of the harriers. Besides the sheets and bottles,

from somewhere someone had procured four large brass candlesticks and two Christmas candles, red and green, which halved, filled adequately the purpose of funeral candles. Only Padna was missing.

Mogwah, who seemed to have in charge the stage-management, looked up and surveyed the table critically.

"Boys," said he with deep gravity, so that they all stopped to listen to him, "there's something we still must have."

"What's that?" said they wonderingly.

"I'll tell ya!" said Mogwah. "What we need is the corpse."

"Right again, Mogwah boy!" My father was by this time fired with the enthusiasm of the born mortician, or, as he would himself have preferred to be called, wake master. "You never spoke a truer word. Go up, a couple of ye, an' bring down Padna," he commanded.

Several of the harriers at once made off in the direction of Padna's lodging and soon they were seen slowly and solemnly returning, the coffined body of Padna on their shoulders. They were followed by a saintly landlord who came out of respect for Padna; to protest his lack of responsibility for the removal of the body; and at the prospect of some free beer.

When Padna was installed with the burning candles at the four corners of his coffin, the red ones at his feet, the green—"for Hope" as one earnest sodality member whispered—at his head, my father turned and fastened a jaundiced eye on my own.

"Didja do what I tolt yeh?" he demanded.

"Yes, da."

"Very well so," he said "Here's sixpence, go way an' annoy yer mother."

It was later that night—much later—when my mother accompanied me back to the club-house. She had already twice before sent me with the message: "Willya tell yer da for gossake ta come home outa that, an' not be makin' a show of himself with the noise they have above?" I went, but for all the notice that was taken of me I might have been selling flags for a charity.

Several more of the harriers wives were there before us, all bent on the same mission, and before very long me mother was sitting in one corner of the club-house, conspiring with them—or so it seemed to me—in surreptitious whispers to disinter the fragments of Padna's past, while I yawned with an empty lemonade bottle in my hand on the outskirts of the group.

Eventually I had to go home alone. I heard my mother returning later, but did not hear my father come in. When I got up the next day, however, he was in bed redolently snoring of stale porter and cigarette smoke. He got up around dinner time. After he had eaten a little and taken some tea he went bleary-eyed and miserable to the club. A short while later he came rushing back in a terrible state.

"Holy Mother of God," he bellowed at us before he was well

inside the door, "we're ruined. Banjaxed altogether."

"Why?" asked me mother, "what is it? What's wrong?"

"What's wrong," he roared, "Padna Crowley is wrong! That's what's wrong! God rest his sowl," he ejaculated as an afterthought.

"Them eedjits, them gowls, them grave robbers—" his powers of description boggled—"Do you know what they done? Drank every penny. Every last bloody farden of the money I collected—oh. An' it the poor man's last spoken word—lookin at me goin' out the door, to berr' him."

His tragic eyes squinted at us from between his outspread fingers.

"Wisha," said me mother, "is that all?"

"Is—is—is that all—" he stuttered. "Are yeh gone mad, woman, or what? Didja hear me? I tolt yeh, with his last breath—'I'm puttin' it on you,' he says, 'An' me other friends,' says he, 'to see I'm buried decent.' An' das what they done to me; lookatit!" he howled. "Gone! Every penny! They drank him up out of his grave, the misfortunate poor bloody eedjits."

"An' weren't you one of them yourself?" said me mother to him. "Begor, I didn't see any sign of abstinence on you, an' you singin' 'Sarsfield's Lament' last night."

"Don't speak to me woman," he roared, "don't speak to me of last night; 'tis to me eternal shame and disgrace. What I want now," he rushed on like a bull at a fence, "is a pound 'til I have another whip up."

"A pound is it?" said me mother, "til' you drink it like the last, an' poor Padna between his four candles lookin' atcha?"

"Ten bob?"

"No, nor five! If ye want ta bury him that bad put him up on yer backs an' carry him; there's enough of ye God knows."

"Is it me—carry—out to the Pike—put the coffin—Padna? God Almighty woman,—” He clucked off into incoherence.

"Well," said me mother complacently, "'tis either that or leave him where he is, for you'll not get another penny out of me."

"But we can't leave him where he is," choked my father.

"Then ye'll have to carry him."

"But we can't carry him—'tisn't right—'tisn't decent that a man like him should be carried, I mean—"

"Then ye'll have to leave him," she said inscrutably.

And with that he stamped off in a rage back to the clubhouse.

He was still there several hours later when I passed it on the way home to tea, deep in discussion. A little later he arrived home, but in answer to our questions only grunted and went on eating. Finished, he scraped back his chair and went to the door, from where he pointed a finger accusingly and said to my mother:

"Well, he has to stay there now, that's all. None of the others have any money either." And he disappeared into the night.

On my way to meet the 'gang' that evening I was alarmed to see the Harriers talking in agitated groups outside the clubhouse, while the doors and the windows were opened wide.

"But blasht it Dan, we must," someone was saying, "we can't go on like this."

"He may have gone off a bit," I heard my father adding with great dignity, "but unless ye help me carry him out to the Pike we'll have to leave him there till the end of next week."

The threat was too much, and eventually it was arranged that they should assemble on the following day, Sunday, at 2.30, and carry Padna to the Pike.

Sunday was a blazing summer day, and there was no doubt about it now, Padna was indeed "Gone off!" I had a last glimpse of him between his candles four—green, for hope, at his head—before the first six brave men appeared headed by Mogwah and my father.

With lengthy faces and partially-closed eyes they began to stalk slowly up the hill towards the distant Pike. Following were the rest of the Harriers, some small boys who like myself could never resist a pageant however macabre, and several dogs.

Soon the men with the coffin were relieved. Between the heat, the effects of the wake which still lingered, and Padna, these changes became more frequent and of increasing jeopardy to the coffin.

Suddenly one of the bearers stopped outside a pub on the road, and said:

"Jay, I'm gaspin for a pint!"

"Well, you can't have a pint," said me da, fearing a mutiny before he had Padna off his hands. "Anyway," he added suspiciously, "you have no money to buy one with—have you?"

"I can't help that," said the desperate man, "I'm goin' in here to have a drink, and thass all about it."

There was a murmur of sympathy from some of the other Harriers, and me da, seeing there was no way out of it, called a general halt. Padna, guarded by two volunteers, was left outside, and they all trooped in.

"Twenty-one—two—twenty-two pints," cried a voice, and these were duly served.

"Ye mean," gasped the publican when he realised that they were not joking, "that ye can't pay for all them pints?"

"I do! But I tolt yeh, me good man," said me da in the best accent under his control. "we'll pay yeh on Friday."

"Ye'll pay me now," said the publican very slowly, "me good man, or I'll call the Guards and let them settle it."

The Harriers looked silently at each other. Gaol! And what about Panda? Maybe they'd put him in gaol too!

It was then my father had his brilliant idea.

"Pat, Jim, Jerry," he said, "go out and bring in Padna."

The Harriers looked up with a start.

"Who's Padna?" asked the suspicious publican.

"Oh, the man who's going to settle our account," said me da equably.

"Well he'd better, or I'll settle ye with the Guards."

Back came Jim, Jerry, Pat, and Padna with them.

"Hey—here—what! What kind of a joke is this?" howled the publican when the coffin was placed on the counter.

"'Tis no kind of a joke at all," said me da pleasantly. "Have us arrested, an' you can bury him."

It was sheer bluff! Under no circumstances could the honour of the Harriers permit Padna's burial to be left to anyone else now. But the publican didn't know this.

"What!" he gasped.

"You heard me."

"But he's——!" The publican looked at the coffin and shuddered! He closed his eyes for a moment! "Get out!" he roared. "Get out and don't leave me ever see ye again, ye——"

And so, more hastily than before, the cortege went on.

At the next pub the publican followed them out onto the road to make sure they took Padna with them when they went; and when they reached the next one after that they took him in with them. It was only the threat of immediate Garda intervention—Padna or no Padna—that eventually dislodged them.

By this time the Harriers were aware that it was their sworn duty to Padna and to their honour to stop at every pub they came to and get a drink on the strength of his personality. So it was late when they reached the Pike.

The graveyard was shut. The caretaker's house was shut! Even the pubs were by this time closed: the priest who had waited for two hours and then given up hope of their ever arriving had gone home, and there was no one to greet the coffin.

"God!" said Mogwah, "what'll we do now?"

"Padna," my father pleaded, turning unsteadily to where the coffin had been propped against one wall of the cemetery. "what're we goin' ta do witcha at all, oul' shtock?" But he got no reply.

"Shupposin'" said a Harrier, his eyes glassily reflecting the sunset. "shupposin' we climb over the wall-sh, an' dig our own grave? An'—an'—buried him!"

"No, no, no," contradicted me da, "we must have the priest. Whassortova pagan are you Dick Healy, dat you'd berr a man witout a priest? An' no one to speak his name for him and he goin' before his maker? There must be a priest to berr' him."

"Gorrest's owl," mumbled the Harriers automatically.

After a pause in which they all sat down on the roadside beside the coffin and looked miserable, Mogwah decided:

"There's only wan ting t'do. There's only wan ting ta be done," he repeated. "We muss leave him here."

"Who? Padna?" asked me father, outraged by the suggestion that they should abandon him after all the trouble he had caused. "How can we leave him here?"

"We can leave him here," pursued Mogwah, "an' leave some

one of the boys to guard him—not that I'd know who'd want to steal him," he added from where he stood down-wind of the coffin, "meaning no disrespect like."

"An' den what?" demanded me da.

"Den we comes back tomorra and burys him," said Mogwah.

The Harriers considered this.

"Thass all right Mogwah," said one of them, "but who's goin' to mind him in the meantime?"

"Well of course," said Mogwah, "there's that too."

There was another glum silence broken at last when one of the Harriers said tentatively. "I don't suppose he could mind hisself, could he?"

My father was emphatic on this point. It was bad enough having to carry him there, but to abandon him by the roadside . . . definitely not.

So they drew lots, and after some discussion, went home, leaving the first two miserable watchers, one on either side of Padna where he leaned against the wall, looking after them.

Me da was in very bad form and spoke never a word on the return journey.

When I came home from school the following day I found him, his temper much the same, all dressed up in a clean, white collar and stiff hat.

"Hurry up," he growled. "Since you were there yesterday it'd be a mark of disrespect if you weren't there again to-day."

At the graveside the rest of the Harriers were there before us, looking dolorous and decorous and a little dyspeptic. They greeted us and we filed into the graveyard where the priest was waiting.

Padna I discovered had already been transferred to the little mortuary chapel. The priest read the funeral service; the gravediggers stood respectfully to attention; the Harriers hissed at each other in sepulchral whispers; the gravediggers raised and replaced their caps, spat on their hands, and proceeded to their melancholy work with great but mournful industry.

The Harriers stood, mute testimony to the solemn moment—while the gravel thudded on Padna's coffin. When it was all over the Harriers thanked the priest, tipped the gravediggers and dispersed.

On the way home my father said to Mogwah! "A very decent end for the poor oul' fella to have, and he without a friend or a relation in the world outside ourselves."

"'Twas," said Mogwah. "'Twas a good end for a lonely man—an' a good man," he added.

"Will a join me in a drink, Mogwah?" asked me da casually.

"Eh—yes Dan, but not in there," said Mogwah in his most refined accent. "We'll wait till we get into town. The drink's not too good in there, I understand."

"Whatever you say, Mogwah," said me da with quiet dignity.

And they walked on, two respectable men going home after the funeral of a friend.

EUGENE McCABE

THE FIRST TERM

(For Margaret)

ACROSS THE BARE QUADRANGLE HE NOTICED THAT THE TREES HAD taken on their first September colouring. He had only been three weeks at Lisnaree but already he was beginning to feel happy.

For weeks he dreaded coming, and although he hated the National school, the idea of leaving home had caused a blind fear: and he was alone. Michael had gone on to Fortconleth and he had been left standing on the great porch with Rev. Mother waving as the car wound through the long avenue of trees. He had hardly been able to see the car and when he was led into the wide high hall, across the shining waxed floors, he covered his face with his hands and broke down completely.

For two weeks he had cried, anywhere, anytime. During class he would forget about home, about his little blue room and the lawns and tennis court, his two white rabbits and his stamp collection; but in the chapel where he could easily look across the gardens and lawns to the woods he would remember and tears would come. Every night when he knelt down and said "God bless Mummy, Daddy, brothers and sisters," his prayer would filter into a sob. In the mornings when Sister Pascal called him and read a letter from his mother, he listened carefully, hating her voice, her thick glasses and hating her for being so different from his mother. And when she handed him the letter he would run out into the playing fields, sit down and read slowly, starting with the printed address "Cluneen," Balincomer, 9th September, and in the other corner, 'Phone: 73.

"My Darling Frank,

I hope you got the little parcel I sent last Tuesday," and again he would be overcome. Hate of Lisnaree, the nuns, and the lonely confined life would burn like acid in his stomach. Often he would decide to run away to the village and take a 'bus to his Uncle Tom in Dublin; it would be easy to get home from there. Then he would realise the futility of his schemes and would sit trembling with frustration and muttering all the bad words he had heard at the National school: "Oh hell! Jesus Christ! Damn it! Oh bloody buggers!" and a moment later remorse would prick him and he would cry for hours after, and write a letter during evening study saying how unhappy he was.

But things were different now as he sat staring out the window at the trees beyond the quadrangle and listening to Sister Pascal's squeaky voice he realised vaguely that he was happy.

It wasn't so bad after all. Michael was right; the nuns

were real nice, but not Pascal who taught Third or Ignatius who taught First. They were ugly and always ordering you. But Sister Stanislaus: she was beautiful, gentle and always smiling like Auntie Frances who lived in London. And Rev. Mother was alright and the rest of them, but you never saw them much. Michael said class was easy; it wasn't. All those silly old sums and the Irish. Stupid old stuff. But it was better than the National school. Nobody ran after you shouting "Cluneen, Cluneen, dirty little swank!" The boys were nice too. They didn't wear smelly clothes, they didn't pull you, and fight and shout dirty words. They were all real nice boys and good fun, specially Johnston in First class.

Michael had said it was a lovely place. It was, too; lovely gardens, and the fountain with the gold fish, and miles and miles of woods and fields. It was great on the walk last Sunday, the big fox and all the dogs with people riding horses behind it. Rev. Mother's Feast Day was next week. It would be great too. Home-made wine, pancakes and nuts and everything and then a paper chase after dinner. Johnston was one of the hares. He was the fastest runner in the whole school and the best at Rugby and Cricket. It fairly shook that bully Reynolds when he tried to take my sweets. Johnston said: "Take it easy, Reynolds, he's only a new fellow." And Fitzharris said, "But he can't eat them all himself;" "Doesn't matter," Johnston said, "he's only a kid and he's new." Johnston said afterwards when I gave him some sweets, "You're a good kid, Martin."

"And now, Frank," squeaked Sister Pascal, "what answer did you get to the first subtraction?"

"I haven't finished it yet, Sister."

"Let me see." She bore down on him menacingly, her thick spectacles peering at a blank page of Frank's copy book.

"Frank Martin, you haven't even copied the sum off the board. You're carrying your wool-gathering to the height of impertinence. 'Haven't finished it yet, Sister!' Indeed, I'm beginning to think you're lazy or stupid or both. Come on, now take down the first subtraction. Quickly now; come on."

She stood over him, the smell of her breath and her imperiousness causing a contraction in his stomach. He felt his cheeks burning and tears of indignation welled into his eyes. "I wouldn't care if she was dead" he thought and the finality of the thought calmed his nerves. He worked out the subtraction slowly, his face impassive, his green eyes cold.

"Yes, that's right; two, three; yes five, eight. Yes you can do it when you want, Frank Martin. No more idling or I'll put you kneeling in the corner. Do you hear! Look up at me, boy."

"Yes, Sister."

She squelched up the class in her rubbers, picked up some chalk and began writing on the board. Frank copied down the second subtraction, but his heart was beating quickly and he was

biting his lower lip. Again he was getting an urge to shout all the bad words he knew, to scream his hate at Sister Pascal and run out of the class hall away from everything. These vibrant emotions were strange to him. Things had been different at home. After school you knew you were going to a nice fire; Mom might be playing the piano or if it were summer, Dad might be off fishing. Life was wandering over fields with Angela or Michael, talking out things. But here it was queer. Nobody cared. That was it; nobody cared. They only cared about class and being in time for chapel. Don't do this; don't do that. And everything was some sort of sin. Lazy and stupid.

He felt a lump rising in his throat as he worked out the sum, but he crushed it down. He looked up at the blackboard.

Yes, lazy and stupid and Sister Ignatius with her teeth and a red blotchy face saying "Are you a pagan, Frank Martin, walking out of the chapel without genuflecting like a——" what was it "——a barbarian. And I never thought! Forgot!"

The bell in the high copper-roofed tower tolled three times; afternoon recreation. Frank wandered out into the broad playing fields with the rest of his class.

"Hey, Martin," shouted someone, "will you play tip-Rugby?" Frank shook his head; he was unhappy again.

* * *

The Christmas term wore on. The woods at Lisnaree lost their glorious colours, and their dejected leaves were scattered over the rich estate during a few wild days in early October. The little rivulet that had trickled quietly through the woods in the summer and early autumn now muttered throatily and at night in the stillness of the dormitory, Frank could hear it vaguely. He knew the exact spot where the water was sounding; a little fall beside a clearing in the woods near the rock garden. He used to lie thinking of it and wondering about the rabbits and squirrels and how they lived through the long wet winter, and the cold clinging fogs. The wood was sad with fallen leaves but for Frank the world at Lisnaree was becoming a sunny, fascinating place.

There was more to life than simply sitting by the fire or walking over the fields at home. Life was a matter of establishing yourself, and so far he felt he was succeeding. After all he was only nine and Peter Johnston who was twelve, and the best at everything in the school was one of his friends. Johnston often gave him chocolate, always picked him first at tip-Rugby and was teaching him to play football. Often too at evening recreation Johnston would wrestle with him, teaching him new grips and showing him different ways of throwing a chap. Johnston was a great fellow, a General's son.

Lying in bed, listening to the rivulet and the wind, Frank was happy. At recreation Johnston had whispered while wrestling, "To-morrow's a free day, Martin: I've a bit of a lark fixed up."

"What is it," whispered Frank excitedly.

Johnston gave him a slow wink, his mouth half open. There was a nonchalant, charming recklessness about Johnston, something interesting about his brown eyes and black hair, and his background that made him a hero in Frank's eyes. He had a vitality that his other classmates did not have. "Babies" Johnston always called them and Frank, feeling excluded from this generalisation, agreed with him.

The Feast of the Holy Rosary was an October day with a breath of Spring about it. At Mass the sun shone warmly through the great East windows, and from the room which had once been a manorial dining hall Frank could see a pheasant strutting on the leaf-strewn lawn. The free day feeling was in the air, a feeling of exuberance. At breakfast everyone was gay. Sitting at Sister Pascal's table he could see Johnston at the other side of the refectory, sitting at the top of the table near Sister Ignatius. Sister Ignatius was laughing loudly and Johnston was smiling slowly.

"Peter Johnston, you are a terrible boy," Sister Ignatius was saying, displaying her big protruding teeth. Frank wondered what Johnston could be saying to make Sister Ignatius laugh so loudly, wondered how he could even talk to Sister Ignatius. He himself never spoke to Sister Pascal though he sat quite near her; her manners appalled him and her nice succulent plates filled him with both hunger and a smouldering anger.

He longed to be out of Third class, away from the "babies" table and Sister Pascal. He used to watch the gentle Stanislaus, smiling, nodding and eating so daintily with the boys in Second class. There was something about her that drew him, something in her eyes and her quiet smile that told him she could understand things, could sympathise.

Nothing had been arranged for after breakfast. The sun coming through, it seemed, a hazy, golden mist, shed a warmth over the playing fields. Frank saw Johnston standing near the hand-ball alleys; he was winking in his slow knowing manner.

"What is it, Johnston?" asked Frank looking up into his face.

"A bit of a lark in the woods," he said. "I've got some salad dressing in my pocket," secretively, and then with quiet pride, "and yesterday I hid some tomatoes near the rock garden."

"Why did you do that, Johnston?"

"You're pretty slow at times, young Martin; can't you see it's a feed I'm planning?"

"Oh!"

"Yes, you can slip into the woods. Go to the waterfall. I'll meet you there. We can go on to the green-house together. There's lettuce in the greenhouses."

"Lettuce?"

"Yes, silly! lettuce. That's why I've got the salad."

"Oh!"

Slowly the whole scheme deepened in his mind, exciting his

imagination. Sneaking into the woods. Out of bounds with Johnston. None of the boys in Third had ever been out of bounds. They were all funks. "Afraid of the virgins," Johnston said.

"Are you hungry, young Martin."

"Yes, yes, I am."

"Good, so am I, starving, a foul breakfast we got."

"Foul," echoed Frank.

Johnston looked around the wall of the hand-ball alleys, watched Sister Stanislaus as she walked up and down "the nun's path," saying her office and then said, "Go down to the tip-rugby, Martin and when the ball goes into the wood, run in after it and stay in. Go to the waterfall; I'll meet you there.

Everything went according to plan. Johnston was waiting at the waterfall when Frank arrived. Frank had come running gaily through the great silent wood, dusk-filled with soft October light. At last he was really tasting life. As he ran the blood quickened in his veins and his green eyes danced excitedly. You could tell that Johnston was a General's son, the way he planned things, so quick and sure and no mistakes; just like a war. Johnston was a clever fellow. But if we're caught?

He felt a catch in his breath at the idea. Two fellows were expelled last year for sneaking to the village. All the fellows said out of bounds was the worst thing of all.

When he saw Johnston sitting on a stone near the waterfall his fears vanished.

"Gosh, hullo Johnston," burst Frank breathlessly, "how did you get here so quick."

"Through the coal cellars, a tunnel leads from the furnace."

"Boy, you're great at thinking of things."

"Just use my head, Martin. Come on let's go."

Within five minutes they were crouching in a shrubbery near one of the many hot houses on the convent grounds.

"Nobody about, wait here, Martin, I'll get the stuff."

Frank watched the lithe figure of Johnston as he crept over to the door and slipped in. A few moments later he emerged, a few crisp heads of lettuce in each hand. They went away through the woods again and when Johnston had collected his tomatoes hidden near the rock garden, they raced, laughing, to a quiet elevated clearing where the ground was dry and where they could be in the sun. For half an hour they sat, dipping the crisp lettuce into the yellow sauce and taking an occasional bite at the tomatoes.

"This is gas, isn't it?" commented Johnston.

"It's great," answered Frank more full of bubbling confidence and daring than he had ever been.

"Let's come again sometime, Johnston."

"We will; and we'll try the orchard next time."

The food finished, they lay chattering in the sun.

"Do you like Dublin, Johnston?"

"I do. It's a great city, you know."

"Is it? I don't like it; I think Balincomer's nicer."

"Balincomer! All the smart people live in Dublin. Country people are mostly stupid!"

"I'm not stupid," said Frank colouring angrily.

"I didn't say you were; you're not really country."

The conversation gradually swung round to home life; Frank was fascinated by Johnston's indifference to his parents.

"Hardly ever see them, the old lady's always dressing up for something and the old man is always off somewhere. We can't get out by ourselves; must be some old nanny with us."

"That must be terrible," said Frank sympathetically.

"You get used to it," said Johnston, leaning on one elbow and shading his eyes from the sun. He glanced around at Frank.

"You know, young Martin, you're a pretty kid and a nice kid."

Johnston bent over him, held his chin and kissed him on the lips. For a moment Frank was going to jump up, but as Johnston took his mouth away, his eyes had the same nonchalant look, as if what he had just done were as natural as a game of handball. He watched him for a moment wondering if it was a special way of showing friendship; maybe it was, but it was queer, it felt queer.

"Look at the squirrel over there, Johnston," he said sitting up suddenly and edging away. "I'm going to catch it."

He felt Johnston's hand on his leg.

"That's a silly game, Martin; sit down for a while; you always want to be running somewhere."

"What time is it?" asked Frank suddenly.

Johnston glanced at his wrist watch. "Quarter past twelve."

"The post comes at half past and if a letter comes and we're not there what then?"

"You're right, Martin," agreed Johnston, a strange frightened look passing over his face. "I never thought of that. Come on, let's go. Go back your way, I'll go mine."

As Frank neared the playing fields, he could hear no shouts. Peering from the edge of the wood, he could see all the boys up at "the nun's path," and Sister Stanislaus giving out letters. A sudden panic seized him. It would be impossible to go across the empty playing fields without being noticed and maybe his name had been called for a letter already. A false excuse jumped readily to his mind, he smiled quietly and strode out towards the now dispersing crowd around Sister Stanislaus.

"Yes, Frank, there is a letter for you," said Sister Stanislaus, putting her hand into the folds of her habit and producing the already opened letter. "Would you like me to read it?"

Sister Stanislaus was the only one who asked permission to read his letters. Pascal and Ignatius just read them and asked questions. Frank nodded and smiled, "Yes, Sister."

She read the letter from his mother in her soft, southern accent and as she handed the letter to him on finishing, asked,

"Where were you just now, Frank." Her eyes large and solemn were searching his soul.

"Nowhere, Sister."

"But you've just come out of the wood."

"Oh, I heard a little rabbit squealing, Sister, and I went in to see if he was in a trap but I couldn't find him. Must have been a weasel or something."

"Is that the truth, Frank?"

"Yes, Sister."

He felt terribly guilty as he walked away, felt as if the lie had burned deeply into his soul, hurting him, as if he had committed his first deliberate sin. It was a dull sinking feeling, a feeling that took all the good out of the warm sun, the free day, the letter from home and the strange pride at having broken bounds with Johnston. He went over to the hand-ball alleys. Johnston was not there. He joined in a game at 'Donkey,' but the heaviness in his heart spoiled the wild hilarity of the game.

After lunch everybody stood up suddenly when Rev. Mother came into the refectory. She appeared very serious. Sisters Ignatius, Pascal and Stanislaus gathered near the mahogany reading rostrum, talking in low whispers while sixty boys stared surmisingly. Frank was staring at Johnston; he seemed worried: Frank could tell from the way his nostrils were dilating.

"Sit down, please, boys," said Rev. Mother finally. "I have something important to say which concerns all of you, something very grave, I'm afraid."

A silence fell over the spacious refectory. Frank noticed a fly caught in a web in the chandelier above his head. It was buzzing loudly. He could feel his own heart thumping madly. He could sense something, something personal and frightening.

"This morning during recreation," continued Rev. Mother in her clipped efficient voice, "some boy went out of bounds through the woods, entered one of the hot houses and stole some lettuce. He was seen by one of the gardeners. Now we don't know who the thief was but we are determined to find out."

She paused; the fly buzzed furiously and fell silent.

"We have, of course, no way of discovering the culprit, and apparently if he is dishonest enough to steal, he will try to conceal his identity. We feel that some of the boys must know or suspect something of this scandalous behaviour and we trust that they will persuade him to admit his fault and come clean with the truth. If not we have no option but to punish the whole school. If this boy has not owned up before the next hour, there will be no walk this afternoon and class will continue as usual."

Frank could feel eyes turning on him. He looked hopelessly over to Johnston who was staring fixedly at his plate, his face expressionless. Some boys were beginning to whisper and look in Frank's direction and he could see Sister Stanislaus standing behind Rev. Mother, her sympathetic eyes looking straight at

him. He tried to read a message in them but could not. Rev. Mother was looking here and there about the refectory, her lips pursed as if awaiting a reply.

"It was me," said Frank standing up. His voice sounded so strange that he thought he had been misunderstood.

"It was me," he said again. Every face was riveted on him. The huge silence was thundering in his ears.

"Very well, Frank Martin; thank you for so much honesty. Go along now and wait at my study."

Rev. Mother had given him the choice of expulsion or punishment before the whole school. He had chosen the latter. He would have to wait for his punishment until evening; Mr. Muldowney, the head gardener, was in Dublin buying seeds to-day.

All afternoon he had been confined to the empty classroom, while the rest of the school went off for a walk; all afternoon he sat wondering why Johnston had not owned up and thinking how appalled Sister Stanislaus must be by his deliberate lie.

A month ago he would have jumped at any opportunity of getting away from Lisnaree—even expulsion, but as he thought of his recent letters home, letters saying how happy he was and how wonderful everything was, he ground his teeth and hissed with a half sob; "Oh bloody buggers, Oh Jesus Christ. I hate everything," and he cried continuously, exhausting himself.

Sniffing and weakened by his emotion, he sat looking out at the trees bending over the quadrangle and thinking of home. The world of Lisnaree, so full of happiness and hope, lay shattered, unrecognisable at his feet; there was nobody, anywhere, who could help him—alone, and in a broken, frightening world.

Public punishment soon; it must be getting near. He dug his teeth into his lower lip. He knew what it meant. Muldowney, the head gardener would put him across a chair in the recreation room, before the whole school; and then twelve. Only one boy had got P.P. last year—Dwyer; it was supposed to be awful.

Evening was falling on Lisnaree bringing a soft October mist which crept imperceptibly through the woods and smothered the bare quadrangle. Here and there the windows of the Convent flung mellow light into the dusk. He heard shouts and laughs: the walk was over; tea would be on soon. He thought he heard Johnston's laugh and as he thought of his dark eyes and white teeth another little gulp of emotion shook him.

The assembled school awaited the public punishment quietly but intensely. As he walked into the recreation room he saw Muldowney standing by a chair, cane in hand, a big bashful looking man with a wine coloured face. He could feel waves of sympathy coming from the rows of intent, watching faces. He was aware of no particular feelings, just a strange impersonal self-consciousness, as if he were standing in a corner watching himself walking towards the chair, as if it were all an unpleasant dream. The last thing he saw as he bent over the chair was

the hem of Sister Stanislaus' habit. Then the cane stung like a sudden, thrilling burn : pain ran in trembling waves to his brain clouding it. Then more : fast, cutting, piercing, jaggling his whole nervous system like continual sharp shocks of electricity. Shivering with pain he concentrated with every fibre of his being against an impulse to shriek out and rush from the room.

More : rapier cracks, sizzling ; waves of pain. Oh Mom, Oh Jesus, another "Oh, Oho, Oh," a weak cry, broke from him.

It was over. Too proud to put his hands back he walked dazedly to the door, down the corridor and groped his way into the music room falling on his knees at the piano stool and giving vent to great repressed sobs of pain and humiliation. When the pain had died the tower bell was ringing like a gentle soothing voice in the evening mist. It was the Benediction bell. He waited till he surmised the chapel to be full, then dragged himself up to St. Mary's dormitory and down to his cubicle. He undressed, got into bed and fell immediately into a profound slumber.

He awoke the following morning with a strange unhappy sensation. Staring blankly at the flowered curtains of his cubicle he wondered what it could be and then with a sudden start he remembered the public punishment. He lay there thinking about it and the sense of injustice at having been cheated came back to him as when he had thought of Johnston yesterday afternoon. Why had Johnston not owned up : it seemed sneaky. After all he was the biggest fellow in the school and the strongest ; the biggest and the strongest letting a Third take P.P.

Tears started again.

But Johnston would have a good explanation : he was a queer fellow at times but he would have a good reason : he must have a good reason. After all, they were great friends ; chocolates and sweets and all the private things he said about his family : and then kissing him like a big sister or something. He would have a good reason and they would laugh at it together. No Third year had ever got P.P. before and he had hardly even cried.

"Benedicamus Dominus."

"Deo Gratias," came the sleepy replies and Frank jumped out of bed ready to face another day.

At morning recreation Johnston was talking with two other boys in First class, Blake and Fitzharris. Frank did not like Fitzharris ; his father was a shipowner, a fact which seemed to give him a quiet but offensive attitude. Playing "conkers" with his own classmates, who crowded round excitedly asking questions Frank watched Johnston hoping he would wink or give him some signal. Usually during morning recreation he would attract his attention in some way, but this morning he got the impression that Johnston was trying to avoid him. Eventually he managed to catch his eye but Johnston pretended he was listening to Fitzharris and his head kept nodding in its slow, charming way.

Frank felt a lump rise in his throat.

"You bloody fool, Maguire," he said when young Maguire hit his knuckles instead of his suspended chestnut, and as a blush of indignation rose to Maguire's cheeks Frank marched away panting, his heart beating fast, his mind in an angry whirl.

At the door coming out from the afternoon recreation he was behind Johnston; he nudged him: Johnston turned.

"Hullo, Johnston!"

"Ah, Martin," Frank could see he was uncomfortable but more than ever the easy pose asserted itself.

"Let's have a talk."

"Of course."

Round behind the handball alley Frank asked, "Why didn't you own up Johnston; it was a bit stinking leaving it to me."

Johnston, still uncomfortable, smiled his slow half smile.

"I wasn't caught," he said.

"Neither was I, and you were seen, I wasn't."

"Nobody knows who it was so what difference."

"Yes, but I owned up, I got P.P."

"I couldn't help that, that was your look-out. I couldn't risk being chucked out just to get biffed with you."

"But it was lousy; it was lousy, Johnston."

"What did you want me to do, get up and say 'Oh, please Rev. Mother I was there too. Punish me.' That's stupid. It's like you, young Martin. You're a bit dumb, so the fellows in your class say. You don't see things quickly."

Frank stared at him. It wasn't Johnston speaking, it couldn't be. He wouldn't say things like that—mean, lousy things that hurt; not after yesterday.

Tears came into his eyes, his mouth trembled.

"God, Johnston," he said. "You're a louser."

Johnston looked furtively around.

"Stop messing like a big baby," he said nervously.

Frank looked up at him and then ran out into the playing fields. After that Johnston never wrestled with him or gave him chocolate. It was as though he had never known him.

And for the rest of the Christmas term, Frank was afraid and full of hate; afraid of everybody and everything, even of the gentle Stanislaus when she smiled at him, hateful when ordered by the other nuns or frustrated by his schoolmates. It was something deep down in him, like a great earth throb, something that gnawed during class hours on the playground and in the woods. Sometimes at night he would wake up in tears. Often too when he would lie awake listening to the waterfall in the woods or looking out of the high windows, at the black outline of trees beyond the quadrangle, he would find the tears welling into his eyes. They were strange tears, tears that hurt somehow, tears that really meant something—and with a little choking sob he would lie down wondering why he was so frightened and unhappy.

JOHN CURRAN

ZILLI

IN THE STRAND AN OLD MAN PLAYED "JINGLE BELLS" ON A SAXAPHONE slowly, woefully out of tune. Behind him was a brightly lit, plate glass expanse, full of Christmas trinkets, decked in seasonal green and silver. Michael stopped for a moment, startled by the poignancy of the scene's associations. The wind was bitterly cold though, and he hurried on, his mind full of pain and regret, his body worn and tired. What a fool to let a healthy body get into such a state, the doctor had blazed at him. He would have to go to hospital and so he would not be able to go home for Christmas.

It was to have been his first visit since he left two years ago. He could see the long hedges on his mother's farm in Mayo. They would be bare now, and black, but red spotted with hawthorn berries; and between them, the fields, yellow and scraggy with untidy patches of faded grass. He had worked these fields during his holidays from the Diocesan Seminary, but his heart was not in them then. He wanted to be away where he could breathe and read and live. He had felt the decay of the countryside around him. In winter or in summer it was all the same: the mists from the hills or the winds from the south all seemed to feed and load the oppression of his spirit. He was conditioned by the surrounding conservative forces and reacted automatically to them, but he wanted to be free; to make himself and not be made.

Round the subway at Trafalgar Square the wind blew in harsh, eddying gusts. Michael coughed and tightened his coat. He pulled his scarf about his throat. The escalator was crowded with the evening rush but he stood quite still and let the people mill around on it. His eye caught that of the girl in the Slix advertisement. God, but it was Zilli's eye—her frank, expressive enticing eyes. The escalator bore him past the advertisement, but he could see Zilli's eyes clearer now, as he had seen her for the first time leaning out of the window of a third floor office in the Strand. Her black hair fluttered around her thin features above an orange scarf and a blueish dress. Her colour choice was never quite right; always slightly off. She had dropped a coin, with a precise little awkwardness, to the musicians below. A good-looking young man who had just finished playing "Jingle Bells" on a saxaphone caught the coin and flashed a smile. She waved and blew a kiss to him. Michael's penny clanged to the pavement.

"Miser," she turned to him furiously. "I gave sixpence. It's Christmas time." And left-handed, with a graceful swing, she threw a ball of paper and hit him in the face.

He had lost Zilli. Zilli, true and false, the unpredictable.

inimitable, unmanageable Zilli, with the wild, wild eyes like sloes that clouded and cleared according to the weather. When he told her that her light changing eyes were an atavistic throw back to a primitive stage of man's evolution she listened gravely to the theory. Rather like a frog's skin changing colour he continued, and she slapped his face.

How the heck did Zilli ever get into an office with a typewriter in front of her? The more he got to know her, the more ludicrous her position seemed. Comic incongruity he told her was her relation to her environment. She was quite annoyed, and said she fitted in, she belonged, just as much as any of the other girls. But Zilli did not belong and secretly she knew it.

"You are a child of the wilds," he told her one night in an excess of fervour. "You are an alien in a city, in an office. Your proper habitat is among the rocks and hazel trees, close to mother earth and the joy of living things. You were made to live, not to pass your life away in a society. You are a being apart from the common flock. You're not even gregarious, let alone social."

"Three years she grew in sun and shower," she commented. "List, oh list, to the eejity Celt," and she ran up to her room.

The following morning there was a typewritten slip on his table. "Your words last night made me think. Man is not a social animal. He is only gregarious. He is a jackdaw, not an ant. Modern society tries to make a jackdaw live like an ant in a moral and regulated community. A jackdaw's moral sense is somewhat erratic and then there's the fact that all the other ants are jackdaws too. Society is an ant-hill peopled with jackdaws which accounts for a lot of things being missing in a general chaos. The situation is antic. Is this profound shallow or silly?"

A train came by the platform and painfully he allowed himself to be pushed into it. Two children with their Department Store Santa Claus parcels clung to their mother's skirts. They looked out of place among the white-collared, black-coated bowler hats that thronged the underground in the evening. Why do all these English business men look so smug, so insufferably self-sufficient? Does nothing stir the silence of their unlaboured faces? Are they never at a loss? Michael longed to be relieved from the strain of feeling at a loss, from the agony of insufficiency and unfulfilment that haunted him. A friend who was a medical student told him that his uncertainty was the psychological complement of the asthma which had plagued him since he was a child. Just as the asthmatic coughing tore his chest and made him wait on his breath; just as he feared the horror of a night attack and the insecurity of sleep, so did his relations with other people grate and rasp, or hang in uncomfortable silences.

Poor Aunt Jane pours out, pure rain

ran the advertisement for tea on the wall in front of him. Like Zilli's tea. It was too horribly bad to be called tea at all. Zilli

worked for an Insurance Company and Michael was employed in an Advertising Agency. She was carrying a tea kettle in the corridor when he met her for the second time.

"Hullo, skinflint."

"Oh hello."

"Would you like some tea?"

He found her so gay, so full of life and fun and pure glee, that he loved her without a moment's question. He saw in her all that he wanted to be; she was the shape incarnate of his ideal self, the living flesh clothing the joyous life he strove to reach for himself. On Friday mornings she brought him tea, and in their five minute chats he watched her expressive flickering features and listened to her talk come tumbling from her lips, full of unusual, erratic ideas. He enjoyed her apt phrases and her curious idiom. He had thought at first that she was the complete extravert, the talk-accomplished ninny, but he soon changed his opinion, for her mind showed a thoughtfulness and an intellectual curiosity uncommon in a girl.

"Existence precedes essence," the French student had drummed into him on that farm where he had spent his summer holidays. "Man," he had continued as though the words were his own, "is indefinable because at first he is nothing. Only afterwards will he be something and he himself will have made what he will be." That was Zilli, Michael thought, the self-made existentialist woman, whose only reality was the impact of her own consciousness. What a curious consciousness she had. A sort of throbbing, erratic intelligence suffused her every activity. She was naturally clever and had read a lot, but for all that her mind was strewn with the most bizarre inconsistencies and her knowledge showed surprising blanks. He told her she was illogical, a mass of contradictions and inconsistencies, but she only laughed spritely.

What a fool he had been, trying to fit her into a universal scheme and making her think logically. She was not made to be consistent with the universe but with herself. The only consistency Michael could see in Zilli was her inconsistency. With bitter reproach he realised now that this was quite enough.

A man grabbed for the pulley at a train lurch and jabbed his elbow into Michael's neck. He started to cough and felt a dry itch grow in the back of his throat. He held his breath, closed his lips firmly and swallowed spittle slowly until his tongue and mouth dried up. But the itch persisted, burning him to cough again. In terror he felt his breath catch and hold, enmeshed by that aching sodginess in his chest. He held the rail, in a breath-seeking agony, rocking back and forward between a policeman and an old lady. Out of half-closed eyes he saw the old lady watching him anxiously, and recalled his mother holding his shoulders, her eyes wild with fright at his first childish seizure. Eyes closed, her face he saw in a Renoir mistiness. His mother's face. Her Faith. Her lips moving. Faith and morals. Mass and Communion. How could

he look her in the eyes again ? The train jolted, and it was Zilli's countenance, bright, laughing, gay above her curving sweater waving to the saxophone player. He resented the vision and tried to shut it out, closing his eyes tight, screwing them round and round, gripping the rail harder. And then his breath came in a long, gushing, rushing gasp. His sleeve was plucked and he opened his eyes. The old lady offered him chocolate. She had taken the wrapping off it. He broke a piece, let it melt slowly in his mouth and felt the soothing liquid run down his burning throat. He wiped his streaming face, and let his body relax, as the breath pushed out into its corners again. His mind went mild and easy like the chocolate he was melting on his tongue.

The train roared into Piccadilly station and the harsh lights brought him to himself with a shock. Where had his mind been all evening? It seemed an age since he had left the doctor's surgery. What the hell was he going into the dead past for? A shiver went through him, shaking the cold, sweated shirt from his back. Was the life of present experience finished for him, except its pain? Had the shock of losing Zilli flooded him with all his inhibitions and paralysed him from living intellectually again ?

A seat was vacated and he sat down, sinking back gratefully into his coat and muffler, hoping to ease the tension of his mind. He tried to stop his jaded brain from working. He would shut his mind and use his eyes instead. Through the window he saw the rows of cable pipes go flying by on the walls of the tube tunnel, unevenly spaced, now moving close, now drawing apart—like Zilli and he. Their relations had never been static ; always moving towards each other, or apart, never meeting in the final fulfilment of desire, nor moving so far away that they lost sight of each other. Not until that last day did the flux and flow of their relations cease. All day they had drawn apart until at night he watched Zilli sit restless on the other side of a park seat, and seem so faint and far away as a flickering candle light at the end of a long tunnel. They had quarrelled over her friendship with the saxophone player ; they had disagreed in what film they would see.

For a long time they sat on the opposite sides of the park seat, each feeling wretched. At last Zilli sat upright and turned her eyes to him. One hand gripped the back of the seat.

"Michael," Zilli's voice was low, urgent. Her eyes dropped. "Do you ever want to sleep with me ?"

The shock of the question had numbed him. When he cast around for something to say his mind had gone blank. All the curious, sex inhibitions of his race burst on him in a flash, blinding his thoughts and tying his tongue. He felt awkward, gross and guilty, his face burning with a blush. He had gestured wildly.

"Do you ?" Zilli had come closer now and was looking boldly into his eyes. Her voice sounded annoyed, insistent for a reply. He could sense her feeling his stupidity and dumbness.

Soon her annoyance would turn to revulsion and she would spurn this inarticulate brute squirming in his overcoat. He strove desperately to concentrate, to get his mind to grapple with the question, to think and answer Zilli. He seemed to be holding a light trying to turn its beam towards a dark spinning area in his consciousness. He exerted a great mental effort to illuminate this swirling blank that was within him, but the light sheered away from it. Even then Michael saw clearly the reason for his trouble and cursed the silly sex complex which his education and upbringing gave him. Sex had been taboo, unspeakable, until the avoidance he had been taught acquired a neurotic force, and left him helpless now, unable to come to grips with the crisis of his life or even to contemplate it. The unmentionable had become unthinkable.

When words had come to him at last, they were meaningless, an uneven trickle of platitudes that fumbled and stumbled its banal course. Afterwards he could not remember what he said. His only memory was of the terrible awareness of his silliness and the pitiful nakedness of his inadequacy. And Zilli, he recollected, too, the memory making him shudder. He thought of the look of disappointment and injury on her face, and heard again her wretched sobs as she left him and hurried from the park. She did not come to work again. He had not seen her any more.

Outside the station a fine powdery snow was covering in the biting wind. The air was raw and harsh, and it gradually filtered through Michael's body. A power-cut had blacked out the Christmas window dressings and on the pavement edge the fruit-stall owners were packing their wares into boxes. An old man hobbled by, bent, trailing two balloons. The snow was coming faster in the wind now. Fine particules blew around Michael's head and neck. Tiny flakes melted, touching his throat. He felt weak and dizzy and moved close to the buildings. Even there the cold wind sought him out and feathery snow blew into his mouth, starting a cough. He coughed cautiously, trying to smother the growing irritation in his chest, and pushed on, fighting against the inertia that had seized his mind. Through a grille came the sound of music. A dance band practising in the basement began to play "Jingle Bells" and a girl sang, accompanied by a saxophone. The association hurt Michael only vaguely, barely chafing against his dim awareness. The whole centre of his being had become numb and dull. He groped along the wall and shuffled on to the street corner. At the corner the east wind, snow-laden, caught him in a furious gust. His scarf was torn from his neck, and raw icy snow covered his throat. A burst of coughing gripped him. In a second his lips were open, seeking desperately for the breath that would not come. Wind-driven snow filled his mouth, blinding his eyes. He stumbled back to the wall, his body convulsed, cough after cough wracking him uncontrollably. Around the corner, faintly, the band still played, with the girl singing "Jingle Bells" slowly in dance time.

NORA WATSON

OLD CROZIER

IT WAS THE WAITING TIME BETWEEN SUMMER AND AUTUMN. YOU saw it in the green leather droop of the leaves, and the leprous wilting of the grass at the lane edges. You sensed it in the slow withdrawal of the sun behind the gray hump of Gullion. It lingered in the classroom where we fretted restless over drying inkwells with their store of sodden blotter, or studied on sandalled feet the brown patterns left by August suns. It was the time of lull, when the chestnuts were bald as apples and the blackberries were still plum red on the brambles. And this particular evening was a Friday, because Dick and I went that evening to Forsythe's.

The Forsythes went to school with us and there were two of them—Cathy and Pearse. They lived in a house that always had about it the homely smell of griddle bread, the sharp sweet smell of flowering currant. They would wait for us at the turn of the Old Armagh Road, and we would spend the evening by the river that changed forever over the fields like a betrayal. There was O'Malley's Ford where the tall green reeds grew straight out of the slimy river soil. They were firm and white at the roots and could be hurled like spears. At the Newry Bridge the water spued white over pointed stones and widened into a still pool where you could sit all day skimming pebbles or plaiting the long rushes into whips. And over the hill there was Keady Turn, where the river was horseback brown and the current ran swift and strong between the black stones. You could catch trout there with your bare hands if you didn't fear the urge of the water against your legs. But we knew that evening we wouldn't follow the river.

It was Pearse who thought of Old Crozier. He lived beyond the bend of the Old Armagh Road, up on the hill where the rooks flew in tealeaf drifts over the trees. He had lost his foot under a tractor and moved on crutches. People in the townland said there was a devil in him. Most of the village agreed that he was "a wee bit touched." They told how the ambulance came to take him to Armagh and how he beat the nurses from the gate with a volley of curses and broken bottles. So they left him alone. They said that he lived on eggs and raw potatoes.

"There'd be crab apples up there now," said Pearse, "and easy taken, for he's stone deaf." Excitement ran through us like a flame. Soon we had reached the first trees, and could see the great wooden gate and the path with its shooting weeds. The house had not been white-washed in years. The windows

gaped blindly from grey walls. You strained your nostrils vainly for the familiar farmyard smells of turf smoke and byre. Silence came out to meet you from the house. Silence came and enveloped you like a presence. Pearse and Dick stood back and planned the attack. There was an oak with a rotted bole half way up its trunk and a branch that fell in an arc into the garden. That would do. They sent me first because I was light and had a good head. Cathy followed, gripping the holds with strong boy's fingers, pushing upwards with hard brown knees. The others came after, grave-eyed.

It was very still. A hen ran suddenly out of the hedge filling us with a brief hysteria. Then silence. The stunted apple trees stood in the middle of the garden about five yards from our tree. The grass beneath had the unwholesome graveyard lushness that draws its strength from the clay of mortals. We waited, listening. Cathy and Pearse agreed to stay in the tree, for they had the strongest backs and arms for hauling to safety.

I swung off the branch, clung for a moment and dropped. Dick dropped down beside me. There was a dankness below. We stood for a moment, alone in the awful vulnerability of guilt, then ran in a noisy wet swishing to the tree and began to pull the apples with trembling fingers. It was not their time and the old tree shuddered at every wrench. Dick's pockets were bulging. Pearse whispered encouragement from above. Then suddenly Crozier was there—his shoulders hunched high as his ears with the upward push of the crutches, his mouth a black hole twisting in the dreadful pallor of his face. He was cursing horribly, though I didn't hear him for the clamour of the high wires in my head and the rush of the blood back to the heart. I saw the scared eyes of Cathy, the pleading hands of Pearse stretched downwards. Dick climbed quickly, but I was transfixed in that dream freeze of terror where the will has no part, mesmerized by the crazy swinging of the dead limb and its filthy calico stump. It came ever nearer through the grilled branches.

"For Christ's sake move! That black devil will massacre us!"

Pearse's voice was hoarse with fear. I knew he must have been pleading a long time. I turned and then something came hurtling through the air, grazing murderously past my head, toppling back to strike my shins in that relentless pain that breaks the body's pride and forces acknowledgment from the lungs. It was a crutch. Horror broke black in me before this violence of hate, before the rag-like crumpling of his huge body as he tumbled unhooked from his remaining support to sprawl hideously on the graveyard grass. Panic came, mercifully releasing my limbs. I leaped for the branch, but it went singing through my hands like fire. I leaped again. This time Pearse caught me and dragged me on a level with his face. It was fretted with shadow, but I noticed all the more the wet white glistening of the skin.

We jumped into the lane and fled wildly over the fields. The furrows ploughed for autumn ran beneath us as sand-wrinkles on an endless beach. The ankle-wrenching corn stubble yielded like thistledown. The wind beat its wings on our faces and we were caught in an exaltation of speed that absorbed us utterly. Cathy and Dick ran ahead. We could hear they were laughing.

We lay on the river bank till the pain of breathing ceased, and watched the sinuous weeds twist in the water that ran slow and green like oil. Dick pulled four apples from his pockets and we bit on them. God, they were bitter. They stripped the lips back from the teeth leaving them dry and rough. They lay on the tongue like the poisonous velvet pith of ash. We threw them in the river and they sank in the sad sideways manner of things drowning.

It was a long way back over the fields and we walked in silence. Remorse settled, subtle as twilight, separating us cruelly. It was not the stealing that weighed on us, but the desecration. We could forget the tattered apple tree but not the crazed animal twitching of the thing beneath it.

A cart came rumbling past, so we said good-bye to Cathy and Pearse and jumped on the back shafts. It tilted slightly with our weight, but the driver hadn't noticed. We thrust our faces into the hay, seeking solace in the familiar summer reek, but found only the minty whiff of dead nettles caught by the scythe. A boy came up the lane driving a straggling line of cows. There was no comfort in their slipping and breathing, in the steady swish of tails on rumps. The boy saluted our driver.

"Looks like a change."

"Aye, it does that."

We turned our heads, swiftly apprehensive. Gullion was hunched in a hangman's cloak of rain. Gullion too had denied us.

We knew that summer would fail that night. She would steal silently from the fields and hedges, leaving her gold fires to smoulder to rust. There would be chestnuts at last, and berries black on the bushes, tight-headed chrysanthemums, frost on pock-pitted turnips. We would gather beech-nuts, rough to the touch as the backs of chapped hands, and drink boiled milk in school at lunchtime—boiled milk that tasted of turf smoke. But all these things were ground beneath the clanking of the cart axle. There remained one sharp flint of obdurate reality—that we had betrayed, and that the punishment was swifter than we had imagined.

The Forsythes waved from the top of the lane as we turned the corner. We had said we would come back, but we felt they knew. Dick threw the last apple in a stream almost hidden by the long grasses. It fell with a plop, loud above the rattle of the cart.

"They were sour," he said.

"Yes," I said, "sour . . . sour . . ."

OURSELVES SURVEYED

A DOZEN SATURDAYS AGO A COLUMNIST WHO APPEARS TO KNOW THE answer to everything confessed himself invariably confounded by the question: 'And tell me, who *are* your young Irish writers?' He could, he admitted, mention so-and-so, and could not omit mentioning what's-his-name, 'but after two or three names I peter out.' A suspicion that this ignorance may not be confined to columnists prompts one into an examination of what exactly is being done in the field of Irish letters by what people under thirty-six. Obviously an age-deadline had to be chosen in a country where the adjective 'young' when applied to a writer usually means less aged than the person who happens to be speaking. Each of the people whom I propose to discuss belongs, then, to what Frank O'Connor has called 'the post-Revolutionary generation, the generation we old gunmen used to look at and wonder what was going on in its head.' Each has found no irresistible current to draw what talent he possesses into the mainstream of a movement; each sits isolated and self-absorbed beside his own puddle of experience. The gunmen had at least their guns in common, and perhaps even a few of the ingenious lovely things that now are dead.

Poetry, curiously enough, appears to be the medium in which the least undistinguished work is being done, and by a greater number of people; curiously because poetry seems to be in a less healthy state in England and in the rest of Europe than is drama and prose. Of the dozen or so poets whom one might be justified in allowing to represent their generation in Ireland at least four have a measure of achievement behind them: Valentin Iremonger, Roy McFadden, Seán O'Riordáin, and Pearse Hutchinson. All except Hutchinson have published collections, and his when it comes may well strike a new swaggering vitality into a body of work shapely enough and firm enough but insufficiently sure of itself to venture further than the garden gate.

It is this sense of restriction that is one's first impression on considering in bulk the work of three out of that quartet. Who can say what new aspect of the personal truth will emerge for Iremonger as a result of his present absorption in Greek Mythology, but for a long time he seemed bounded by his own exquisite suburban small world of lost toys and old pear trees and the girl next door inexplicably dead; wars and war's alarms and the noisy brawl of life outside were no more than the nightmare dreams of that ubiquitous small boy whose white

flower nobody wanted when he ventured outside his garden. McFadden too seems sadly rooted forever in a rainy Ulster landscape whose detail assumes the varied shapes of death:

The honest man is lonely, seeing death
Lie like a hand on the flower, the sculptured skull,
Rise in the eyes behind the wavering laughter,
Movement in leaves behind the indrawn breath.

O'Riordáin lives in a more cloistered world than either, where shadows of the Seven Deadly Sins make odd patterns on familiar walls, and his whole attention seems bent at times on the watching and the praying. Yet the work of O'Riordáin (all of which is in Gaelic) has brought a new dignity and vigour to an old language never perhaps so rudely abused or so often as by those whose literary energies were concentrated on the use of it rather than to what uses it could be put. The lonely integrity of this Corkman is one of the most heartening signs for many years that a virile Gaelic literature could grow up in our own time despite the influence of the zealots whose enthusiasm for the language is matched only by their inability to use it to any recognisable purpose. And since the proper placing of O'Riordáin among the first rank of Irish poets necessitated a digression, it is as well to mention here the work in Gaelic of another poet, Brendan Behan, who has to his credit a handful of lyrics that could (were the term not recently degraded) be described as Elizabethan in the combined delicacy and vigour of their imagery and sharply individual voice that speaks through.

Pearse Hutchinson strikes one as having two oysters: the world, and (as Niall Montgomery has said of Joyce) the word. His poetry has an astonishing freedom and brilliance, a fearless approach to language that stamps everything he writes as most arrogantly his own. Perhaps he may have been influenced by Gerard Manley Hopkins, but if so the influence was fully absorbed, made to serve his own imperious needs. Long before he was twenty, Hutchinson was publishing verse full of tempestuous vitality in *The Bell*, full too of indications that he had already studied the mechanics of his craft to excellent advantage. He was never a muddler. He broke what metrical laws remained because he knew them, was humble in the hands of words because (even at that age) he was their master.

Up to the skies with your eyes: the rain-dour clouds
frown at them, slap them, send them packing
down to the ground, for the wind to be flanning
at tousle-hair hedges and you, lacking
greater objectives—now they, of themselves, make a bound
at a peacherino, with legs pell-melling, and scarlet scarf.
And you suddenly hark to your optic yelling:
Flowers, wind, sky-woman, water,
nothing at all could be better!

The morning-wonder of that gave way to the cynical glitter of things like *Listen, Satyr!* For the past few years, Hutchinson has been leading a wandering life in Spain and other parts of

Europe, and his recent poetry reflects something of their colour, much of their emotional wilderness. As a poet he seems to have gained a wider compassion, an understanding of human values, but neither forms more than a backcloth against which the personal drama is played out. I very much regret that none of Hutchinson's recent work is available to me for quotation, and can only repeat my belief that his collection when it comes is certain to prove of importance.

Curiously apart from the work of his contemporaries is that of Maurice James Craig whose volume *Some Way for Reason* brought a shock of pleased surprise some years ago. Mr. Craig scarcely seems to belong to this century at all, and all his affinities lie elsewhere. His verse has an Augustan precision, a sort of geometric grace, and the mind that plays behind it has a whimsicality that is not unlike Swift's in the Dean's happier moments. His numerous cat poems—and his attachment to this animal matches Baudelaire's and Eliot's—have that complete identification with another plane of existence that so often stamps the work of Craig, which appeals to me personally much more than that of Robert Greacen, born a few years earlier in the same North-eastern corner of Ireland. Greacen has proved himself an alert and valuable editor but somehow never makes one conscious of his having the personal vision without which any writer of verse might just as well be building limericks or writing for the newspapers.

Between this group of poets and the next (again with the exception of Hutchinson, who is almost ten years younger than the people with whom I have placed him) there is a pretty wide age gap, and one can find the work of such poets as John Montague, Anthony Cronin, John Ryan, Máire McEntee, Maurice Irvine, Richard Murphy, Francis J. Barry, and Tom Kinsella only in the files of little magazines and newspapers, and on the shelves of subscribers to the Dolmen Press which has privately printed the work of several of these. It is more than a little difficult to draw any general inference. The Dublin group, Montague, Cronin, Ryan, are the most articulate, though not always in verse. They are perhaps hysterically conscious of Europe and the necessity for Irish writers to become first European in outlook (whatever that may mean—since talking any more of Europe as a whole is no more than a romantic abstraction) before they can afford to be Irish. Their household gods are Eliot and Auden, and their verse owes nothing to either. The puddle of private experience is meticulously fished and from its depths are drawn now and again loud protests against the stifling of the Sovereign Ego, nostalgic summers smuggled back from Paris or Siena, laments for lost innocence, and good reasons for poetic silence.

Montague has an imaginative penetration into the motives of human behaviour, a well-stocked mind as genuinely sensitive as it is hard, and a command over what Sean O'Faolain has called

'hesitating rhythm' which often produces lines of extreme loveliness:

So timid kettles in the morning make
A bubbling friendly plea; remember the hour's brevity,
When laughter fills the garden walls
With noise for love's sweet sake;
Remember how tenderly light falls
On all that life can break;
How we must persevere in loving,
In each loss discovering strength.

Cronin, apparently less dedicated to the poetic medium than Montague, has yet produced some work of value and one poem that could be taken as the anthem of this generation.

But we who have climbed to the top of tall houses in winter
And heard in the gathering silence the limp of the clock,
Who dunned by our need through the days are unfailingly traitors
In sad and undignified ways to each circle of friends,
How can we praise in our poems the simplified heroes
Or urge to the truth we have never been true to ourselves?
O Love that forgives because needing forgiveness also
Forgive us that we have not lived through a virtuous day
That we ask to be judged in the end by our own compassion,
Thief calling to thief from his cross with no Christ in between.

For the rest, Richard Murphy, winner of the A.E. Memorial Prize in 1950, is a poet of potential importance whose first collection is shortly to appear; Máire McEntee mainly concerns herself with admirable translations from the Gaelic and some rather timid original work in that language; Maurice Irvine—from the region that produced McFadden and Hewitt and Craig and Greacen—has published some verse of remarkable richness and beauty in the liturgical manner of Clarke; Tom Kinsella is shortly to publish a starkly interesting translation of the *Deirdre* saga which is in contrast to his previous satirical bent; and Francis J. Barry, who has not yet kicked free from the tangling influences of Joyce and Eliot has succeeded at twenty-three (*Who, A Stranger*, Dolmen Press 1953) in staking his own plot of ground with a measure of unruly poise in the very gesture:

There is space lonely for enclosure,
priests to be housed in comfort,
banks built, hospitals for the sick and needy
Architect.
On with the motheaten. He is rather tired
I should think, who has been so busy last night
undoing good. O commerce protect me.
This stretch of the road
unlovely and unloved (as the say) leads
somewhere or nowhere as
the case demands it. Another
helping of cabbage would go down well:
man the destroyer, who buildeth up.
Money is tight around here. Very tight. Nobody
buying. Nobody. I ran over a hedgehog
this side of Nenagh. Sneem looked blue—
in the misty morning all
anodyned in autumn all

withered with cowslips all
 waiting for winter, no time, noontime,
 the honk of the hungry horn and
 the wounded wayfarer bent upon improvement.

As I have hinted earlier on, prose has not been so well served by our generation. One novelist only of importance has emerged, and of the small group of short story writers, only one has any real achievement behind him. Benedict Kiely is remarkable primarily in that among contemporaries who write often badly and generally seldom he has published five novels of some importance, two critical studies, and a political work while yet on the right side of thirty-five. That is not to suggest that his is mainly a quantitative achievement—quite the contrary. If there is any sense at all in talking of 'the European novel' the best of Kiely belongs in that category beside Gide's and Mauriac's and Green's and Koestler's and Soldati's. His world is essentially a beleaguered one, in which the integrity of the individual is threatened both from within and without; less concrete a threat perhaps than that which shadows say Koestler's people, and far more dangerous. A man might survive the press of prison walls and be crumbled by the pressure of suburbia, a peculiarly Irish suburbia of course, where a fur-coated woman is good because her uncle has a parish in Limerick, and the children of her neighbour must not be played with because their father doesn't belong to the confraternity, and was once seen drunk in Santry. The threat within is often quite as deadly—more often than not a sense of guilt uneasy on the brain as a tumour, with God as a sort of Bogey Doctor forever looking over one's shoulder. Brian Flood's unsuccessful seduction is due as much to his guilt-consciousness as to the virtue of his lady. The Doctor's joy in ruining himself is vitiated by a sickly remorse that is strong enough to make him uneasy and too weak to reform him. The pleasures of misery are never fairly weighed against the miseries of lawful pleasure and the choice intelligently made. Sometimes one feels that when Kiely himself reconnoitres fully around the territory on either side of the paradox that teases his characters he will be the better novelist.

However one can still be grateful for him as he is. Nobody else has set so well the contemporary scene, or has had so often the careful facades of his prose split wide open by life itself. A slightly older novelist who sprang from the same region as Kiely—Michael McLaverty—has a much narrower range of consciousness. His novels, though far more beautiful and shapelier unities, have nothing like the potentialities of Kiely's. Compare, too, *The Cards of the Gambler* with any novel say of William Sansom's (his exact English contemporary) and one sees at once the measure of Kiely's achievement, the admittedly not quite flawless creation of a character bounded by his own place and time of birth yet touching constantly a universal plane where such boundaries have no meaning.

It is a fashion in Dublin just now to tell anybody who writes a short story that he ought to be writing a novel and anybody who announces work in progress on a novel that it would be wiser to master fully the slighter and more difficult medium of the short story before spreading himself in a novel. Why, by the way, does nobody ever tell the baker that he ought to be delivering potatoes? Anyhow, I am fully aware of the triteness of remarking that when James Plunkett produces a novel, as he inevitably will, all the wealth one finds scattered in his short stories will have been properly invested. His is a talent which inspires me personally with the liveliest admiration, and he sets it playing, as it were, in one's own back yard. Dublin he seems to regard with the sort of impatient tenderness Frank O'Connor has lavished on Cork, and he knows it better, one fancies, than he knows any room in his own house. Time after time in Plunkett's stories the old strumpet city looks one brazenly in the eyes, without make-up, stripped even at the accosting stage as she seems to have been also for James Joyce. A Dublin labourer is on his way to work:

He pushed the cork in tightiy and went down High Street. The cutting was deep. It exposed the tunnel which honeycombed that part of the city, vaults which radiated from the Cathedral, ancient sewers which ran down Winetavern Street to the river. Once they had been drinking cellars and rebel plotting dens. Now the rats had taken possession. He remembered the clock. It was part of his duty to go down and punch it every hour. That was to make sure he inspected it. A pneumatic drill spattered as he passed, and the man nodded to him. 'Bad luck to you,' he murmured. But he was referring to the rats.

Plunkett's characters too can keep nothing from him. The inarticulate bitter adolescent is as silently voluble before him as that old labourer in *Mercy*. His cold imaginative sympathy seems boundless. And, perhaps most important of all, Plunkett has not failed any more than Kiely has in coming to grips with the known daylight, Erin without the green, where a dangerously near romantic past has fathered a present in which Movements have dwindled into party moves, heroes into veterans 'scuffling for pensions,' even perhaps an austere ancient Faith into a local religion in danger of strangulation by Sodality. Born of all this, one of the most courageous and disturbing Irish stories of the last decade was Plunkett's *The Wearin' of the Green*, which indicated more clearly than any of his previous work the hard road he will most likely follow.

'My life is behind my eyes,' says a character in one of Seamus de Faoite's stories. 'I do go wandering in it. And I do get lost.' His small strange world is a limbo of lost people and lost crafts, a sort of Munster ante-room to the future where the victims of progress comfort each other with fragments of the life behind the eyes and finger together the tools of cooper or wheelwright or stone-cutter on which the dust is already thickening. de Faoite has immense gentleness and strength and the live

image tingling at his fingertips, and the territory he covers is known to or anyhow noticed by nobody else. Without having any of Thomas Hardy's stature he very often recalls him, although their several countrysides seem to have penetrated respectively through brain and pores. The isolation of Hardy's Wessex from Victorian England was as complete as the de Faoite world's is from ours, the smug suburbia of Kiely and the teeming urban life of Macken and Plunkett. Seamus de Faoite is unlikely either to join forces with or become a strong single influence on his contemporaries; his narrow undisputed talent is likely to go on in its own way gathering depth and individual richness.

Patrick Brady, Richard Power, Maurice Kennedy, Mary Beckett, Patrick O'Halpin, J. F. Reynolds, John O'Connor, and Jim Edwards have also chosen the short story as their main medium, though Reynolds has recently ventured into the realm of radio fantasy. If they can be said to have anything in common it is childhood as a theme, that or the wars of adolescence, and one feels perhaps that the influence of our best storyteller, Frank O'Connor, may be responsible. He is certainly as dangerous a model as Tchekhov, because the shimmering surface simplicity conceals the same cross-currents of mature judgment, and much the same irony. John O'Connor and Jim Edwards among others appear to give just the simplicity, and though they write fairly well in their chosen field, the place needs fertilising. Brady and O'Halpin and Kennedy are much more aware of implications, and Mary Beckett, a Northerner, shows signs of an unusual sort of wry humour not unlike Katherine Anne Porter's. Richard Power, who comes from Waterford cuts occasionally almost as close to the contemporary bone as Plunkett, and will I believe, be important later.

Thin though the prose achievements may seem, still less has been done in the theatre. Here of course, this generation has been confronted with a problem. Dramatists make a theatre not quite as often as a theatre makes dramatists. Whatever may have been the faults and follies of the Old Lady in her young days, ignoring people who were trying to write for the theatre was not one of them. The Abbey has apparently lost interest in fostering new dramatists, and I know of at least three tolerable first plays (by people who have established themselves in other branches of writing) which came back with a printed rejection slip. The uproar O'Casey created on the formal rejection of his *Silver Tassie* is itself enough to suggest how carefully he had been nurtured from the beginning, even if we had not evidence of this elsewhere. And one of the autobiographies of Lennox Robinson makes clear how warmly his very first effort was welcomed.

All this is not to suggest that no new plays of merit are being produced just now—one or two are—but merely to stress that the present bureaucratic atmosphere surrounding the Abbey does not

make for the stimulation and encouragement of new writers. More often than not, also, a good new play whose fate is still to be decided by the public is whipped off after a doubtful week to be replaced by the twenty-seventh production (or whatever is is) of some well-worn piece. Such a play was Maurice Meldon's *House Under Green Shadows*, and it was left to the 37 Theatre Club to make a home for his next work, the highly successful and witty fantasy, *Aisling*.

Maurice Meldon, in fact still in his middle twenties, is almost the only dramatist we can lay claim to. His experimental approach to the theatre comes like a fresh wind to the jaded kitchens and pubs which haven't changed much since Yeats hated them as a young man, and his irony and complete awareness make one regard him with the liveliest hope. I understand that Mr. Meldon's new play is not to be left to the Little Theatres, and that the Abbey has also accepted for production a play by Brendan Behan, all of which is heartening news.

Seamus de Faoite, already considered as a short story writer, did not suggest too strongly that he is anything else by writing *Harrigan's Girl*. The play was bedevilled by a flock of characters which conformed to no known rule of the theatre, by a wilful indulgence in poetic diction for its own sake, and by the tritest of plot contrivances. Joy Rudd, however, revealed in *Séadhna*, which Madame Cogley let us see, that hers is a talent most intelligently related to her medium. The play, a very free adaptation of the Gaelic novel—out of Goethe by An tAthair Peadar, one might say—had the sparkle and poise we have come to associate with contemporary verse drama as practised by Fry and MacDonagh.

That then, is more or less how we stand or fall. It is certainly true to say that this generation has published less books than our elders had done at our age. One could offer a number of reasons for this, but the fact remains that Yeats published his first book at twenty-four, Clarke at twenty-one, Joyce at twenty-five, O'Flaherty at twenty-six, Bowen at twenty-seven, Higgins at twenty-seven. Nobody now except Roy McFadden, Benedict Kiely, Maurice James Craig, and Robert Greacen has published a book commercially before the age of twenty-seven.

However if one takes the trouble to look for it throughout the pages of little magazines and one or two newspapers, it will be seen that some good work is being done and it must be left to those whom it interests to decide whether the lack was in us or in him when our learned columnist petered out after 'two or three names.' True, there is nothing like a school of young writers in this country, but as to that, Hemingway informs us:

'All art is only done by the individual. The individual is all you ever have, and all schools only serve to classify members as failures.'

ROMANTICISM AND EXILE

THE CLASSICAL-ROMANTIC CONTROVERSY HAS RAGED FOR SO LONG that I feel some trepidation at approaching it even slightly. However, the purpose of this article is not to weigh the merits of the schools of thought, but to examine in the light of the work of Irish poets living abroad, the susceptibilities of the exile, his purpose, and the results. Irish poets do offer the greatest possibilities in this field, for they tend to be negligent in assimilating the ways of their adopted homes; it might be said that they carry their Ireland with them—and whereas many other national groups would swiftly tend to become Anglicised, or Americanised, as the case may be, the Irishman develops exaggerated nationalistic tendencies: thus the seeming paradox that the poetry produced by Irishmen abroad is almost aggressively traditional, in the only true sense of the word.

There are, of course, notable exceptions to the rule. Louis MacNiece, for example, is quite European in his outlook—apart from a few of his earlier poems and an occasional reference to an Irish place-name in his later ones, there is little evidence of Irish tradition in his work. The same can be said of W. R. Rodgers—though there is in the narrow conception and monotonous technique of his work that stifling air of provinciality which pervades the worst of Irish poetry; both MacNiece and Rodgers, however, share a kind of surface liveliness that might be called Celtic. Perhaps the best illustration of my contention, among the established poets, is Ewart Milne, for, even though he has travelled widely, his poetry is deeply rooted in the culture of Ireland. His work, influenced strongly by early Irish poetry, and more superficially by that of Yeats, is that of an artist who knows his medium thoroughly, and who uses his knowledge with the sureness and ability of a craftsman. Through Mr. Milne's writing the theme of individual isolation runs very strongly, and this theme is almost always expressed by the desire to participate more fully in the lives of others: so at times we hear the cry:

Ever and round and round
Hand to hand and to mouth
Each to his private shout
Each to his spot of ground,

and at others the invitation:

Then reach me your hand, my bonny, my buddy,
Come dance though we die of the tune

This concern with the individual and his relation to society is a romantic one. Mr. Milne's outspoken criticisms of institutions and attitudes, spring from a deep inner conviction about an ideal

state of being, and as he says:

Not by bread alone
But not without bread
Does man live:
By bread is all his liberty.

Of course, there are other sides to Mr. Milne's poetry—or rather there are changes of expression, for no matter how light-hearted he may seem to be, he is out to make a point, and make it he does. His trenchant satire is well known and some of his poems come too close to the mark for the comfort of his readers.

Mr. Milne is the embodiment of my argument; the fact that he is an exile, and probably a slightly disillusioned one, as here:

there are lands like the land of my birth
lands where love is a sin
lands where the light went out
or the light is long coming in

and here:

But the land is fair without compare
we see with the eyes of the mind.

enables him to feel for the much maligned 'little man' who is buffeted from pillar to post, and who is the great problem of society today, or rather for whom society is a great problem. For Mr. Milne this man is like *The Cobbler who Lost His Shoes*:

But faith, I'll come upon them yet, and then
With butterflies and honeybees
From morning until evening comes
I'll skim the topmost boughs of trees
I'll steal across the silent moon,
I'll prance to greet the shouting sun

Closest to Mr. Milne in choice of subject matter, though not in its treatment, Patrick Galvin is one of the foremost of the younger Irish poets. His language is more private and of a darker texture than Mr. Milne's, nevertheless his work has unmistakeable power, and generally, a restraint conspicuously absent from that of most of his contemporaries.

Mr. Galvin has written many poems that might be loosely described as being humorous, but none of these poems is, I believe, really motivated by a sense of *fun*; they are rather concerned with the disparity between the world of myth, and that of everyday reality, also they display concern at the lack of imagination in the make-up of *homo sapiens* 1953. Most poets of any worth construct a personal myth, with touchstones and equivalents to the bread-and-cheese aspect of life, but few have the honesty to admit its limitations and incongruities, let alone admit them publicly. This honesty amounts to a kind of self-satire, but it goes beyond the self, and satirizes, very effectively, many other writers who would probably be the last to admit as much. As an instance of this I would like to quote a few lines from *The Ballad of Irish Writers*, a sad comment on the state of contem-

porary literature and Mr. Galvin's reaction to it:

In Cork there are but nineteen scribes
With moonbanged brides and metal lungs,
Nineteen scribes with dangling teeth
And fields for beds, and seaweed tongues.

In Limerick there are eighteen Poets
With cardboard coats and ding-dong chests,
Eighteen Poets with Linen cheeks—
Ten plagues on top of all the pests!

Another interesting point about Mr. Galvin's poetic method is the consistent use of folk lore, and allusion to popular modern songs, as "my heart broke in three places"; I believe this is to do with his wish to use images that are available to everyone. Even the language of poetry which is said to approximate closest to common speech is still highly stylized, and I think that Mr. Galvin may be trying to plumb the depths of the hidden pool of imaginative thought which lies so static in these days. On the other hand, the use of tags from modern songs may be to play the mass-producing lyric writer at his own game—in any case, the lines adapted gain a great deal in the process. The similarity between Mr. Galvin's poems and the traditional ballad form is self evident—the direct attack of the ballad, and its economy in scene-setting is quite apparent in his work. Here is the first verse of *Four O'Clock*:

At four o'clock coming home the road
Four o'clock with lights on the snow
I met a woman with burning hair
and ringlets of fire upon her shoulders.

and two lines from another poem:

The song of the dead from the winter clock
That pondered and ticked over inches of snow

In the last instance, the long "o's" setting the "song of the dead" against the ticking of the clock provides a balance of contrasting sounds that builds an effective aural picture.

I think that Mr. Galvin has two problems to resolve within his work, firstly, the gap between poetic myth and more prosaic reality, and then, and this would apply to all poets writing today, the problem of audience. The Poet writes for an audience that seems almost non-existent, and the inversion which often results from this can only be harmful. On the other hand, of course, only the strongest will survive this acid test, but strength is not the only criterion—and certainly not the most important.

Of an anthology which he recently edited, G. S. Fraser wrote in the introduction that "An anthology of the 1930's would have been full of answers, but this one is full of questions". This is also true of Patrick Galvin's work, perhaps more so than that of many poets—his is essentially a poetry of scepticism and protest, and the answers to his questions are bound up, as in Ewart Milne's work with the fate of the individual as a creative being in a destructive society. Mr. Galvin's problems, as with those of all true

poets, are those of our age, so there is no case for ignoring them.

The two poets discussed above deal exclusively with human situations—Nature is perhaps involved to some degree, but is never the inspiration of a poem, nor are the poets concerned to identify themselves or the characters in their poems with any aspect of Nature. In a way this is a pity, for there is a lack of good descriptive poetry today; we live in a certain locality, grow used to it, and for some strange reason—probably again to do with lack of imagination, ignore our surroundings. It is a greater pity when we consider how rich in descriptive poetry Ireland used to be.

It would not be fair to Richard Murphy to dub him a 'Nature' poet; he is certainly not that, but he uses an imagery that is almost exclusively natural, and recognisably Irish. In one of his most successful poems he gives me the impression of speaking through Nature, that is to say that his feelings are transmitted to the elements. The result is clearly fine writing:

The breeze as we plunge, like anger
Stiffens, a fact real as the miles of sea
Between us and land, between us and the island.
The girl and the child vomit.
She veers and bucks.
There is not refuge on the gannet's cliff.
We are at sea growing rough, with an old puckain
The boom spliced by an oar, fatal rigging,
A helmsman happy but perfidiously unawake.
You know what brought us, imaginary sirens
Romance in an island of notorious ancestry
The myth of a shrewd spitting brutal gunwoman
Who piously endowed an abbey.

Mr. Murphy—who has distinguished himself by winning the AE Memorial Award—cannot properly be termed an exile, for the very good reason that he now lives in Co. Galway, however I do insist that the time he *has* spent abroad, mainly in England, has heightened his poetic powers. His work is possibly more introspective (in a sense of the word modified by what I have said above) than that of Patrick Galvin, but it is not unhealthily so—indeed there is a clarity about his poetry which is admirable:

..... dazzling diamonds lay
Battering my sense to feel no symbol, no time,
Merely hostile rain, sepia spraywater,
In my Irish garden

Richard Murphy's images are hard and crystalline, he uses words with an almost fastidious precision, which is certainly justified in the face of the present shoddy state of our terminology. His failures occur through over-wordiness—so infrequent a fault that it is strikingly apparent among his usual economic use of words. This economy is a great power in Mr. Murphy's hands:

He last on this savage promontory shored
His logical weapon. Genius stirred
A soaring intolerance to teach a blackbird.

So before alpha you may still hear sing
In the leaf-dark dusk, some descended young
Who exalt the evening to a wordless song.

His wisdom widens: he becomes worlds
Where thought are wings. But at Rossroe herds
Of village cats have massacred his birds.

Anthony Cronin is another poet whose work is sometimes marred by wordiness, as here:

And this though he found before long what the others would hide
And knew that for all it is only the honest who speak:
All of man's pitiful dodges he found were the same
And the frown of the strong was as false as the smile of the weak.

Somehow I am left with the feeling that this could have been done better with half the number of words—but perhaps it is unfair to pick out the last stanza of a poem which opens very well:

Knowing how cruel they were who would not understand
But safe from their laughter and anger in bed the boy
Dreamed of a future when love would reward his goodwill
And all would combine to endorse who now with a sneer would destroy.

I have the feeling that Mr. Cronin might object to being called a Romantic poet, but if that is so it can only be through some misunderstanding of the term—for certainly the last thing he can be accused of is sentimentality. His work is that of a man trying to work out a coherent *weltanschauung*: not that I would deny the strong Christian element in Mr. Cronin's work—on the contrary; but his Christianity seems to me to be entirely instinctive, while his thought is that of a sceptic.

It is this gap between thought and feeling that, I believe, resolves Anthony Cronin's position as an artist, although, of course, this can only be a transitional period in his development.

W. H. Auden has influenced Mr. Cronin strongly, and not for the worse:

It was proper for them awaking in ordered houses,
Among russet walls, where the peach grew ripe to the hand,
Walking on lawns where the fountains arched in the summer,
To praise through their gentle days the dwelling virtues
And architect epics to honour the good and the brave.

This influence exercised over Irish poetry, although at first sight surprising, is wider than would be imagined; although it has had a more laudatory effect on Mr. Cronin's work than on any other poet I can call to mind, it is by no means confined to him. Robert Greacen's second book shows unmistakeable signs of it:

Going away? Going away to your atoll?
Escape if you can before the brickbats fall
Don't forget your cheque book.

or:

I remember at School the trouble with masters
Frowning; cutting the key to fit the normal lock.

Mr. Greacen seems to me more of the technician than of the craftsman; he wants to know how poetry works, so that many poems he has written are rather like five finger exercises, and,

in this technical sense, he has been prone to many influences—Auden being the most emphatic, but others remaining in evidence. Eliot appears in places, in the shape of “cigarette stubs”, “sunlight on her hair”, and “septic agony”. Such influences are, of course, necessary to the development of any poet, and it is to Mr. Graecen’s credit that little effort is needed to discern his authentic voice beneath them.

Where many poets of today err, is in putting too much weight on unusual words, and ignoring the context into which such words are introduced; this results in poetry which is unbalanced and, often, ugly. Mr. Graecen, happily, has a poet’s eye, and a poet’s ear, inasmuch as his poems are always well-proportioned unities.

Recently Mr. Graecen’s theme seems to be that of the spiritual integration of the individual. His poems seem now the less easily evoked aspects of being—*The Nightmare*, published in the last issue of *Poetry Ireland* is a good example of this:

He turns his head towards the broken back of the sky,
And seemingly finds peace in this outlaw sphere of loneliness,
Knows freedom through necessity, finds life through death.

The early verbal slickness has gone, and in its place a deeper, non-sectarian, religious sense has enriched his poetry—and, it is to be hoped, will continue to do so. Poetry after all is concerned with life and with what life is all about, in this sense the poet is a teacher, and I believe that Robert Graecen realises this responsibility, and is not liable to betray it.

The position, then, of the exiled poet, seems to be that he must first put his own house in order, and a great deal of adjustment is needed to reconcile him to the fact that, whether through choice or necessity, he is “a stranger in a strange land.” In the process of this rehabilitation, or perhaps because rehabilitation is impossible in any permanent sense, he discovers truths about himself which were not evident before. The truths of individual responsibility, the interdependence of human beings, and above all the need for understanding, not only between individuals, but between nations; not only of love, but of hate. It is only by constant inquiry, constant struggle and the courage to face possible disillusionment that such problems as he faces can be resolved. And in concluding I would like to emphasise again that the struggles of the poet are our own struggles, for, in a sense, we are all exiles.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE HILL OF HOWTH by
L. A. G. Strong.
Methuen. 12/6.

GENESIS by *Kevin Faller.*
Boardman. 9/6.

The theme of *The Hill of Howth*—a writer who has lost his memory and is trying to establish his past—inevitably lends itself to over-analysis. Every scent must be followed, every scrap of evidence scrutinised. This, as Mr. Strong must have discovered, is a considerable task: the reader must be led back, must be shown the why and the wherefore, must continually grope with the unreal psychological condition of the hero and at the same time follow the thread of the narrative. Considering these difficulties, the novel is an achievement.

The story on one plane (the Dublin boarding house) is absorbing, the dialogue accurate and witty. The five characters on this plane, three of them rather extraordinary, are very much alive. There is "Moo" with his crippled body and soul, his passionate desire to corrupt everything around him, to inflict pain on the God who made him thus—a terrifying, grotesque portrait. And then the Professor, an idle old voluptuary who tells a few unlikely stories—the poetic effusions of a sensualist. Rosie then: a delinquent with the cold reasoning of a child, a feminine resilience, and below some deep hurt, an essentially good nature. Nora and Tim are the more normal elements. Nora, with her sad pride, her pathos, her confusion, is a really fine study.

The other plane involves long discussions on human personality with an actor. The actor is somehow vague: one remembers his shirts and trousers but nothing of

what he says. This is due one would imagine to the explanatory conversations he is forced to make, conversations that dull the reality of character and situation. The dialogue between Rolleston and the actor (despite the matter) is controlled, dignified and intelligent—perhaps a little too intelligent. The final bout with Father MacMillan is a little hazy: there is an almost passionate concern to explain, justify and resolve. It does not ring the bell—one is left wondering but it is not the wonder of mystery: there is a note missing somewhere.

The Hill of Howth lacks the urgency often found in Mr. Strong's earlier novels. Tension and interest ebb noticeably at times, and this is almost certainly due to the task of integrating the psychological search with everyday life in a Dublin boarding-house. There is often an uncomfortable feeling of unreality. It is, nevertheless, a very courageous attempt at a very recalcitrant subject and is on the whole thoroughly good reading.

Kevin Faller's first novel, *Genesis*, is unsatisfying in many ways. Tensions and interior monologues elbow rather than compel the story along an uncertain path to a sensational ending. These tensions and monologues are occasioned by birth, copulation, death, suicidal and maniacal tendencies, suburban seediness and the soul's struggle towards God. This basic material is however unconvincingly handled.

The opening is slow and without the touches that give reality to the characters or setting. The story is set in Dublin and Howth but for the reader it could just as easily be Glasgow and Dunoon. There is no conscious effort to evoke with exactness: "Her father a patriot when patriots were unpopular had died in the fight that had freed the

country from centuries of oppression," and "Before they had married money for pleasure had not been such a problem; they had made full use of the variety of entertainment that the city offered." The first example reads like a school history, the second like a guide leaflet to a seaside resort. Mr. Fallor does occasionally get a striking image: "One lurched through life grasping ineffectually at events and ideas, a dancer out of time with the music."

Perhaps the portrait of the civil servant's wife is the finest thing in the book. She has all the intricacy and helplessness of a frustrated woman a naive resignation one moment a cold brutality the next. There are many good things in *Genesis*. One remembers the sense of greyness, the odd details that throw light and shadow on character, though seldom on environment. It is as if Mr. Fallor was much more concerned with what he had to say than the way in which he says it.

Eugene McCabe

MISS FINNIGAN'S FAULT by
Constantine Fitzgibbon.
Cassell. 15/-.

THE NEW INVASION by
Winefride Nolan.
Macmillan. 15/-.

Mr. Fitzgibbon, under contract to write a non-fiction book with an Irish setting, embarked on discovering details concerning his ancestors. The family is a junior branch of the Geraldines of Desmond—"whose Norman blood was soon swamped by that of their Irish wives."

We are given anecdotes of various eccentric people but the book is shapeless and, at times, amusing. The best pages are those written in defence of John Fitzgibbon, 1st Earl of Clare; here the author lays aside his too readily jocular style and reveals deep feeling, but checks himself—"I seem to have set up as his apologist." (There was need of one) and then he goes on in lighter mood to deal with ruins and traditions and the hill of Tara. Many will find entertainment here, for the approach is that suited to the gene-

ral mind of to-day—touch-and-smile-and-pass-along, half believing, wholly non-committal. A better piece of work, while appearing to lead where the author's fancy wandered, would, when viewed as a whole, show design.

Very different is the approach of Winefride Nolan—earnestness is the keynote of her book, and it makes happy reading: a chronicle of adventure, the adventure of invading a friendly country.

In January of 1946 a man and wife (he Irish, she partly so) left their Lancashire home and set out to make a home and run a farm in Ireland. How many others have, within the last few years, done likewise? The book is fitly called *The New Invasion*, and of the thousands who read it many will have the double-edged enjoyment of comparing with the author their difficulties, triumphs and failures. The farm taken over by the Nolans in Co. Wicklow covers eighty-two acres the task they faced was immense. Need was pressing, so "we started our activities as 'earning farmers' by selling milk at the door." This was a source of pleasure and puzzlement: "'who is your Mammy?' I would ask, as each fresh child arrived. The reply was always the same: the name was Byrne." Winefride Nolan being a newcome, could not understand; slowly she realised there must be more than one of that name, and so enquired. "No wonder the child smiled. More than one Byrne in Wicklow! There are hundreds of them. In our Sassenach ignorance we did not even know that this was O'Byrne land." They had much to learn, but this young couple liked learning.

There are no gushing sentiments about their adopted country. The Nolans respected the land to which they came, and now they love her, not loving any the less the place where childhood was spent.

The farm-conscious among us will turn with special interest to the chapters dealing with eggs and bacon, winter and rough weather. We will all surely thrill and sympathise over the 'nightmare year.' Well done. Winefride Nolan—yet better done if not quite so many details.

Teresa Deevy.

DÚIL by Liam O'Flaithearta.
Sairseal agus Dill. 8/6

Although well-written, the style at times becoming remarkably vivid, these stories by Liam O'Flaherty are disappointing. They seem intended to convey a deeper expression of life and living through a criticism—a disgust almost—of humanity and of nature; Mr. O'Flaherty however fails to achieve the reader's confidence and one rises from the book, a little amused perhaps, but certainly wearied and confused. It is as if a train journey ended in a siding and the traveller becomes increasingly aware that the night is falling and that he will have to walk alone to his destination.

The failure of these stories to communicate an experience is not due to the fact that they are written in Irish; Mr. O'Flaherty writes here as vivid, simple, and evocative a prose as he has achieved in English. At least one of the stories, *Mearbhall*, has been previously published in English and the author uses the same treatment and method in all of them, as he has generally employed in his more recent work in that language. Neither is the failure due, on the same evidence, to Mr. O'Flaherty having had in mind a new kind of audience for his first complete work in Irish.

When we come to examine the stories individually we find them curiously lacking in plot. This is the case especially with the nature stories; these are hardly stories at all, not only because there are no dramatic tensions or development in them—inevitability is after all necessary to the author's method—but there is nothing of that arousing and satisfying of curiosity, that experience of knowledge, which is essential if essays in nature study are to rise above anecdotes. Mr. O'Flaherty tells us of a cow plunging to death in her quest for her still-born calf, of a hawk finding courage to attack his arch-enemy, man, in defence of a nestmate. We know of these things already, or at least we are prepared to admit the possibility of them. The penny reader told us of them. Mr. O'Flaherty writes better and more movingly than the school-book but communicates nothing more.

His tales of poverty, of un-

spectacular insanity, and of little desires as these affect human beings, fail because we find the circumstances or the characters incredible. This is due to a failure to create first of all the type, the common link with his readers before going on to make the typical individual and unique. The characters are queer and the settings unusual; that is all. They lack conviction.

P. J. Madden.

HOME IS THE HERO by
Walter Macken.
Macmillan. 8/6.

Actor - dramatists, MacLiammoir always excepted, are prone to substitute "good theatre" for good drama, and Mr. Macken is no exception. His play, so effective on the stage, is a disappointment in the study. Lines that provoke a ready laugh in the theatre seem not a little meretricious in cold print.

Mr. Macken, as well as being an actor is a producer, and a novelist of considerable achievement. One feels that his play suffers from his versatility. His protagonist, Paddo, returning home after five years in a convict prison, is an incongruous blend of Bill Sikes and King Lear. Paddo's daughter Josie is another puzzle. There are moments when she reminds one of Nora in *A Doll's House*, but she quickly degenerates into a gangster's moll.

The author is haunted by a fear of imitating O'Casey. One is always expecting Trapper O'Flynn to refer to Paddo as a "darlin' man," but his creator keeps him off the stage most of the time. Dovetail, who arranges a ceremonial welcome for Paddo, is the one integrated and amusing character in the play. He has the best proof of his friends' affection: "Wouldn't they drink the last tanner I have?"

Mr. Macken's most original character is Manchester Monaghan, apparently an idler, but "very well dressed in a grey pin-stripe suit with the stripe a little too wide for decency." Monaghan enjoys his hectic reputation, but Josie brings out the essential goodness in him, and they will be happy in a small, snug Council house which, and here one shares Mr. Macken's wrath, will probably lack indoor sanitation.

T.O'D.

Poetry Ireland 22

EDITED BY DAVID MARCUS

PHILIP IRVINE

For Ellen

THOMAS KINSELLA

Two Poems

RICHARD KELL

Two Poems

ROBERT O'DONOGHUE

Kinsale

PHILIP IRVINE

For Ellen

Fermanagh, land of wood, of hill and lake,
is full of love and of deep music:
what has Man done to her that she
should rive her horsemen mad?
Their prides lives after them, peoples the morning mists
with evil spirits eating out the hearts
of those who follow after, but the rot
has not yet spread, the infantry is pure.

There still are men who love the open air
And kill not, but help all things live.
This poet knows of two, a man and wife
who live close to the silences
of wood and lake, hearing the Lord God
speak to them out of the earth they work,
for they are gardeners.

Their life flows on, through gold and silver
on to the fresh, then sooty-olive green, and so
they follow the seasons, and the bell to church
each Sunday, wondering sadly in their hearts
why they are left, when all the horemenn fall.

Why are they left? Because joy tears
spring to the eye that sees them smile:
and deeply look into each other's eyes;
why are they left? Because they love
And bring some salt to this tired human earth.

THOMAS KINSELLA

Dusk Music

In hospital, where windows meet
With sunlight in a pleasing feat
Of airy architecture,
My love has sweets and grapes to eat ;
The air is like a laundered sheet ;
The world's a varnished picture.

Books and flowers at her head
Make living quarters of her bed
And give a certain style
To our pillow-chat, the nonsense said
To bless the room from present dread
Just for a brittle while.

For obvious reasons we ignore
The leaping season out-of-door,
Light lively as a ferret,
Woodland walks, a crocused shore,
The transcendental birds that soar
And tumble in high spirit,

Because that nothing must be Spring
While she for breath is bargaining
Is our polite convention.
Suspended Summers than can bring
Out some long since remembered thing
At most we care to mention,

Being happy that our memories
Should browse among monotones
And not incline to run
Too rashly near the crevasses
Breaking the present, lest we freeze
In doubt at what's begun.

Under an hygienic ceiling
Where my love lies down for healing
Tiny terrors grow,
Reflected in a look, revealing
That her care is spent concealing
What, perhaps, I know:

The everpresent crack in time,
Forever sundering the lime—
Paths and the fragrant fountains
Photographed last Summer from
The unknown memory we climb
To find on this year's mountains.

'Ended and done with' never ceases,
Constantly the heart releases
Wild geese to the past.
Look, how they circle poignant places,
Falling to sorrow's fowling-pieces
With soft plumage aghast.

We may regret, and must abide.
Grief, the hunter's, fatal stride
Among the darkening hearts
Has gone too long on either side.
Our trophied love must now divide
Into its separate parts,

And you go down with womanhood
Who in her beauty has combined
And focussed human hungers,
With country ladies who could wind
A nation's love-affair with mind
Around their little fingers.

And I communicate again
A limping ardour to my pen
To find a further answer.
As, having looked all night in vain,
A weary prince will sigh and then
Take a familiar dancer.

Now the window's turning dark
And ragged rooks across the Park
Mix with the branches; sundry
Clocks about the building mark
The hour; a train to Southward, hark!
Laments in distant country

This parting to accompany,
Our fingertips together lie
Upon the counterpane.
It will be hard, it seems, and I
Would wish my heart to justify
What null hungers remain.

Per Imaginem

(For the marriage of B.F.S. & E.D.)

Alone we make symbols of love
Out of echoes its lack makes in an empty word.
Inaccessible softness of breast or voice in the dove
Or high gull grace are what we are thinking of,
The poised canticle of a bird.
Time must pare such images to the heart:
Love I consider a difficult, scrupulous art.

A drumming of feet on a lake
When a stretched word touches the meaning like a swan
Points in the vanishing whisper of its wake
The course of argument that love must take
Until word and image are gone.
Out of a certain silence it may bring
The softer dove or a skylit, glittering wing

Across the deepest speech
When what is said is less than what is heard
Gift to the shaken giver melts into each,
Receipt on the lips alights and returns to teach
What further words can be spared
Till graven language centres love with quiet
More full than spoken gesture can supply it.

So, much that the instant needs
Being faded token of what the next replaces,
An echo deepens as the past recedes,
Words like swans are swallowed into the reeds
With lapping airs and graces.
Speechless white necks dip in the fugal pause
When streaming images transfigure the dove that was.

What beats in its flaming throat
Or under its plumes, or what transfigures the flight
Of a spiring emblem, what inexpressible mote
Drifts in the slanted shaft where loves are afloat
Flowers in no single sight:
In composite hearts there sings a full repose,
Mute splendour of a breast-soft, sea-graced rose.

RICHARD KELL

A Suppliant Speaks Of The Goddess Kwan Yin

She was a human thought, a dainty protest
Against the claims of godhead. We who loved life
And would have looked for truth in songs and flowers,
In precious stones and wine and women's beauty,
We could not take the Master at his word,
Close up the shutters while the sun was climbing
And light the lamp indoors. The wise men gave us paradox ;
Some being frightened by their cleverness
Locked themselves in for ever and stuffed the windows ;
And some allowed themselves a compromise,
Cherished the scents and colours in the garden,
Yet were penitent when they threw a glance
At the slim girls walking in the street.
But we, uncertain of the ways of god,
Too passionate or weak to crush desire,
Or else too terrified of death supposing
The wise men were deluded,
We took the risk of sin and prayed for mercy.

Here is the goddess, head graciously tilted,
Gentle and grave and wise, serenely smiling—
So we had come to think of her—a symbol
Of pure mercy. But sometimes I have seen
A little harlot demure and yet coquettish,
Her slender body made for men's hands,
And in the beauty of her brow and eyelids,
The pouting lips, the finger at her breast,
A hint of roguish humour and contempt.
It was as though we knew, in spite of all
Our glossy thoughts, the Master's way was best ;
As though our souls betrayed us into truth,
Giving us back our dreams in this carved girl
With the sly face and small ambiguous hand.

Kwan Yin Gives Her Explanation

Sly and satirical you made me
As well as gentle and serene,
Harlot confused with blessed lady
Because the inner mind had seen
The truth you were evading:

Not that the Master's way is right,
But that you are fool and coward—
To have your sensual delight
And still avoid some moral hazard
Praying when you take fright.

Kill the self-pity you named Kwan Yin—
Then call me lover instead of whore
And joyfully reinterpret sin.
Or smash my image, dance no more
And light the lamp within.

ROBERT O'DONOGHUE

Kinsale

There was a fire on the streets of the
Day before Yesterday ;
wine in the wind and a flash of Spain before the broken down years;
there was a Queen's violence and a scattering of princes before the
hills knew quiet ;
there was a shedding of tears ;
lovers and death and the sound of the sea.
Then the after-time of long quiet,
and only the sound of the sea ;
gulls in the whimsical quietness ; dry nets on the quay walls ;
idleness, tobacco smoke, and blue jersey talk ;
beetle-like women with wind-cracked faces asleep in their hooded
shawls ;
asses and carts and the curate out for a walk.
There is ash on the streets of the
Day before Yesterday.

IRELAND OF THE SAINTS

by D. D. C. Pochin Mould

A stimulating record of the Celtic church and its great figures and of the surviving monuments of this fascinating epoch.

There are over 60 illustrations.

Medium 8vo.

21s.

B A T S F O R D

September 21st

KATE O'BRIEN

The Flower of May

A sympathetic, rounded and complete picture of a young girl growing up, written with an immensely deep understanding of character. This is Kate O'Brien's first novel for eight years.

Book Society Recommendation

12s. 6d.

HEINEMANN

A NEW NOVEL

by JOHN D. SHERIDAN

The Rest is Silence

This moving story, humorous and warmly human, will enhance the author's reputation as a novelist on both sides of the Atlantic.

10/6d. net.

THE TALBOT PRESS, LTD., Talbot Street, Dublin.
and all booksellers.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

John Curran : Born Co. Sligo, 1927. Studied and worked in Dublin and London. Has not been published before.

Maurice Kennedy : Born Youghal, Co. Cork, 1924. Has written much dramatic criticism and his work has also been published by *The Dublin Magazine*.

Sean Lucy : Born Bombay, 1931. Came home to Ireland in 1935. Studying Arts at U.C.C. Has been published in *Poetry Ireland* and *Irish Writing*.

Eugene McCabe : Born Glasgow, 1930. Educated in Ireland. Graduated in Arts from U.C.C. Has not been published before.

Val Mulhern : Born Dublin, 1925. Has been published in Ireland and the U.S. and her first novel appeared from Chatto & Windus in 1951. Has just become married to Maurice Kennedy.

Robert O'Donoghue : Born Cork, 1925. His poems have been in *Poetry Ireland* and *Irish Writing*.

Eoin Neeson : Born Cork, 1927. Has written a number of plays. Previously published in *Poetry Ireland* and *Irish Writing*.

Nora Watson : Born Co. Antrim, 1932. Has graduated in Arts from Queen's University.

Gordon Wharton : Born England, 1929. Has lived in parental home in Mayo and in London. First published in *Poetry Ireland*.

Richard Kell : Born Co. Cork, 1927. His poems have appeared in *The Bell*, *Irish Times*, *Rann*, etc.

Thomas Kinsella : Born Dublin, 1928. Previous work appeared in *Poetry Ireland* and from the *Dolmen Press*.

Philip Irvine : Born in Philadelphia, U.S.A., in 1930. Irish father, American mother. Has lived in Ireland since 1939. A student of Queen's University, Belfast, he hopes to commence training for the ministry next year. Has never been published before.

For the encouragement of creative work in LITERATURE and MUSIC in Munster the ARTS COUNCIL (through its Cork Advisory Body) is offering the following Prizes for Competition:

LITERATURE

- (a) FIFTEEN POUNDS for a Short Story in Irish and TEN POUNDS for a Short Story in English, neither to exceed 5,000 words;
- (b) FIFTEEN POUNDS for a Poem in Irish and TEN POUNDS for a Poem in English, neither to exceed 150 lines.

MUSIC

- (a) FIFTEEN POUNDS for an unaccompanied Part Song for Mixed Voices;
- (b) TEN POUNDS for a Song with Piano Accompaniment.

—o—

The Competitions are confined to Irish nationals resident in Munster.

Entries, which must be received not later than 31st December, 1953, should be sent to:

Sean Hendrick, Hon. Secretary, An Gasra Ealaíon Corcaighe,
14 St. Christopher Rd., Montenotte Park, Cork
from whom full particulars may be obtained on application